Richard Cable
The Lightshipman

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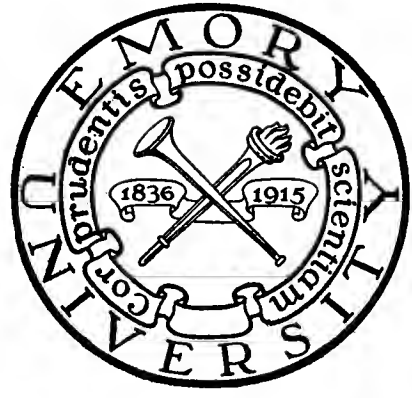

RICHARD CABLE

VOL. II.

RICHARD CABLE

THE LIGHTSHIPMAN

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'MEHALAH' 'JOHN HERRING' 'COURT ROYAL'

ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXII.	HOME!	1
XXIII.	HOME?	17
XXIV.	A FISH OUT OF WATER	32
XXV.	LAVENDER	47
XXVI.	MOSQUITO STINGS	61
XXVII.	IN THE 'ANCHOR'	75
XXVIII.	THE WORKING OF THE POISON	89
XXIX.	CUTTING THE CABLE	103
XXX.	NOT TO BE RESPLICED	120
XXXI.	GHOSTS	138
XXXII.	BENEATH THE EVERLASTINGS	158
XXXIII.	PENTARGON	174
XXXIV.	THE 'MAGPIE'	190
XXXV.	'MAGPIE' BEER	208
XXXVI.	YET	220
XXXVII.	THE DIVER	235
XXXVIII.	ST. KERIAN	248
XXXIX.	A SPIKE IN THE NEST	261
XL.	THE FIRST SHELF	274
XLI.	SEVEN RED WINDOWS	290

RICHARD CABLE.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME!

As Josephine had made up her mind, and neither her father nor her aunt could move her to alter it, and the rector, from motives of delicacy, forbore giving his advice, the marriage was hurried on, and took place within three months of the funeral of Gabriel Gotham. As it must be, argued Mr. Cornellis, the sooner it was over the better. To the great astonishment of the neighbourhood, Josephine was married almost as soon as gossip got wind that she purposed marriage. No sooner was she married, than she departed with her husband in the new boat, the 'Josephine,' for a cruise to Holland and Heligoland and the Danish coast.

The neighbourhood was in some com-

motion, and consulted what was to be done. Such a case had not occurred before. Miss Cornellis was a lady; Richard Cable, a common man. It was true that not much was known of the antecedents of Mr. and Miss Cornellis; but they were related to Squire Gotham, and she had inherited the Hanford estate. What was to be done? Were Mr. and Mrs. Cable to be called upon? How could the acquaintance with Mr. Cornellis be maintained, if the neighbourhood agreed to ignore the Cables? Metaphorically, every one looked at every one else to know what every one else would do; and what every one else did, that every one else was prepared to indorse. What a pack of moral cowards makes up Society! It is a herd of timorous sheep, bleating to one another to know whether the gap in the hedge is to be passed or not; and when the general consensus is arrived at—heaven knows how—where none will take the initiative, all run at the hedge-gap together, and wedge each other, in their eagerness to be not the last to push through. Sometimes a whole flock will hover about a gap, turning their stupid heads about to see whether they are surrounded by their fellow-sheep, and baaing queries to them, What is to be done? backing a little now, when the

sheep in front are bumped back by others; then pushing forward, because the sheep in front ease away a little nearer the gap. Then an old ewe comes up and runs through, and in a moment all follow. The old ewe in the society round Hanford was Lady Brentwood, whom formerly Gabriel Gotham had admired.

'Bless me!' said Lady Brentwood, 'she's not committed a sin. She's a right to please herself; some like apples, others like onions. I shall call.'

Then all Hanford society said: 'We will call.' And Hanford society having decided to call, went headlong to do so, before the return of the bride and bridegroom. Society said that it was its duty to call at the Hall after the death of Mr. Gotham; and Society was mightily inquisitive to know what Mr. Cornellis thought of his daughter's marriage, or rather, what sort of a face he put on it.

Mr. Cornellis had a hold on that section of society which esteemed itself pious, for he was perfectly familiar with all the tricks whereby well-intentioned, simple, easily persuaded persons can be taken by the nose and led to the grindstone. He knew also how to make them hold their own noses to the grindstone, and smile sickly smiles, and give the

signal to him to turn the handle. But he was not without influence with quite another section. He could tell a good story, was interested in horses, did not object to a bet, played billiards well, and was esteemed a good fellow, without an atom of cant or humbug in him. Now the sporting men argued that Cornellis would be sure to influence his daughter, and it would be the deuce of a pity if she did not pay to the hunt as liberal a subscription as the old squire. Then again, these Cables had a yacht, and it would be agreeable to be invited for a cruise; so they would call, and see to it that their womankind did likewise.

In early summer, there is an insect with eyes out of all proportion to its body, of a sickly colour, that attacks carnations, pinks, and other soft-wooded garden plants. It is provided with a proboscis, which it drives into the heart of the stalk on which it alights, and through this proboscis it taps the plant of its sap. The creature works itself up and down on its long hind-legs like a pump, and it succeeds in pumping the vital juices out of the plant, and throwing them in a mass of froth, like spittle, around itself. As this so-called Cuckoo-spittle insect acts on garden-flowers so do our neighbours act on us, and we in turn act on

them. When anything interesting and gossip-producing happens in our families, they come to us, attach themselves, drive their little tubes down some weak, soft joint, and suck out all the information they desire, and throw out what they have abstracted from us in a world of frothy chatter round them. If we are very shrewd and on our guard, it is interesting to watch these aphides trying us with their pipes—tap, tap here, and tap, tap there ; and if we wince by ever so much, in they go, up they kick their hind-legs, and work the pump as if they were extracting for themselves the elixir of life. But if we present to them an impenetrable skin, it by no means follows that they do not make froth-bubbles about us, only, instead of bleeding us, they extract all the requisite liquor from their own imaginations. It is almost incredible how very little liquor will spread into a very large bubble. An aphis will in a few minutes surround itself with a globe of foam a hundred times its own diameter, and our social cuckoo-spittle insects are not behind the insect in their powers of making mountains out of nothing.

A good many of these aphides of society came about the Hall during the time that the Cables were away, to condole with Mr. and Miss Cornellis on the death of Gabriel Gotham,

and to congratulate them on the marriage of Josephine. How they drove their taps! How they worked at the pumps, how they explored all the joints of the brother and sister! What froth-bubbles of gossip they exuded! Mr. Cornellis was not easily sucked; but Aunt Judith was less impenetrable.

Mr. Cornellis met all with a *bonhomie* and assumed frankness which turned every proboscis up. 'Girls are romantic creatures. Unfortunately, Gotham left her everything. That upset completely a head already disturbed by her nautical adventure. She had a foolish but generous idea that as she owed her life to the worthy fellow who had saved her in the great storm, she must devote that life to him. I will say this for him: he seemed overwhelmed with the gift, and half disposed to run away when it was proffered. The bequest of Gotham emancipated her from my control. Alas! girls—children generally, in this declining nineteenth century, are not obedient to their parents, but self-willed and self-determining. It was in vain for me to remonstrate. The girl had her high-soaring ideas, and they carried her away. We must make the best of a bad job; and I shall ask my dear friends and neighbours to assist me in lightening to Josephine the humiliation and

disappointment which await her, and to exercise towards her and Cable that forbearance which I feel will be necessary.'

There was something grotesque in the way in which the visitors inquired after the Cables. They put their questions, made their remarks in a tentative manner, as if they did not know how to approach the subject with delicacy. It was as though Mr. or Miss Cornellis were troubled with a boil, and the public mind was uncertain where the boil was situated, and whether it was consistent with strict propriety to inquire as to the condition of the boil; whether it were not most judicious to ignore it, and observe the movements of the party suspected of suffering from it, what sort of faces he drew when sitting or standing or leaning, and to speak cheerfully on ordinary subjects, and not seem to observe the anguish and pallor and twinges of the patient; but to be dogmatic upon the situation and condition of the boil to all the neighbourhood, when out of the house.

What a pitiful world we live in! How infinitely helpful we are to one another in the burying of family skeletons! We call on each other and take afternoon tea with each other, and know all the while that our hostess is covering with her skirts the unearthed bones,

which she has been sorting and shivering over till she heard our carriage-wheels, when she dropped them all on the floor and kicked them under the chair. We know they are there, and we give the table-cover a little pull, to make it conceal a ghastly hand that is thrust out, and which our hostess does not see to be exposed. And we chirp about the weather, and laugh over some little local gossip, and go into admiration of the exquisite flowers on the table, so sweetly fragrant; while the smell of mouldering bones rises up and overwhelms the otto-like scent of the Jules le Fèvre in the vase. How daintily we tread in our conversation among the dead men's bones that strew the ground of our neighbour; and how, if we happen to touch one, we stoop and scrape the earth together over it, laughing and chattering about matters indifferent, pretending that we are picking daisies! How persistently, when we are dining with our friend, we turn our back to the cupboard in which we know the skeleton is, and put up our eye-glasses to admire the picture opposite, and the china on the cabinet on this side and on that side of the one cupboard, and do not observe the existence of that one cupboard! How quickly, if some other incautious guest approaches it with

inquisitive eye, we set our backs against it, and use every ingenious effort to divert his attention to other objects! What a fit of sneezing takes us, and makes us turn away our eyes, when our friend, incautiously pulling out his handkerchief, lets fall a bone; and whilst we turn our eyes and noses away into our own pocket-handkerchiefs, we know he is picking up and reconcealing that bone inadvertently exposed! Is it said that every man has a skeleton in his closet? That proverb but half expresses the truth; every man has the bones all about him—in his breast-pocket, in his fob, in his purse, in the lining of his hat, in the tails of his coat, in the toes of his boots, like the Pilgrim in 'Sintram.' It were well for him if he could confine his skeleton to the cupboard. But skeletons refuse to be so confined; they come to pieces, however well wired together the joints may be, and disperse their fragments everywhere, playing us grim practical jokes, turning up from under our pillow, dropping on us from the ceiling, tripping us up as we are stepping downstairs, lying beside our plates when we expect to take hold of a knife or fork handle. That is why we are so dependent on the goodwill and courtesy of others, and have to ask them to put their feet on our bones, or turn their

heads aside a moment, when they turn up inadvertently.

Pitiful and considerate though we may be when in the presence of our friend, our pity and consideration fall off us the moment we have left him. Then we run to our other neighbours and call them together, and peep and whisper, and point where the bones are hidden, and tell their nature and condition; and put out rakes, and scrape them out of the earth, or rap at the walls and knock holes through which we may peep at the grinning skulls behind. How the nature of these bones changes according as we look at them in the presence of the owner or of others! In his society we scarce see them, and hide our eyes; but when we draw them out and turn them over in social talk with others, what merry-thoughts and funny-bones they prove to us! How we titter over them! What figures we build up out of them! how we dress them with grotesqueness! How we treasure them! If we happen to carry off a neighbour's skeleton bone, we are not like selfish dogs that run and bury their bones lest others should bite them also; but we go generously about the bone to every kennel within our run, and show the bone to every dog, and invite him to snuff at it, and take a nibble and play

with it, rolling it over, pawing it, licking it, tossing it about. Then snap ! we have caught our bone, and away we go with it to the next kennel to repeat the same generous sport.

Mr. Cornellis was far too well versed in the ways of the world to attempt to conceal his skeleton, to affect ignorance of its existence. He brought it out ; he dressed it up ; he exposed it to the full view of every visitor ; he said as much as : ' Don't content yourselves with a bone of it. Carry the whole ghastly thing away with you in your carriages, beside you ; or perch it on your saddle, if you are riding ; and sit behind and hold it up, and show it to every one, clickering and nodding its hideous head, as you go through the streets. Or, if you are walking, unhitch all the joints, and stow it away about you. Fill your coat-tail pockets ; stuff your hat with it ; cram it into your waistcoat ; open your mouth and choke your cheeks with it ; extend your hands, and grab all you can of it ; leave none behind ; take all with you, and be welcome.' Dom Pedro of Portugal, when he ascended the throne, dug up Inez de Castro, to whom he had been secretly married, and had her skeleton arrayed in royal robes, and crowned and enthroned in the cathedral choir ; then summoned all the nobility and clergy and

courtiers to do homage to and kiss the withered hand of the corpse. And Mr. Cornellis brought forth his skeleton, and invited every one to see it, and commiserate him openly on being encumbered with it, and even to join with him in a dismal joke over its existence.

His conduct in the matter took the sting and spice out of it, put the neighbourhood in good-humour, and prepared it to accept Josephine as one who had made a blunder, and must be helped to repent it. Cable would be quietly snubbed and thrust aside; his wife made much of, and pardoned, if she consented to keep her husband in the background; or, what would be better still—at sea.

Mr. Cornellis had considered well what was best to be done, and by the time the young couple returned, all the country round was ripe to receive them on the terms he proposed.

The 'Josephine' arrived at Hanford a day or two before she was expected. A sailing-yacht does not come into port to the day like a steamer, nor can the best of vessels be punctual to a minute, as a train is supposed to be. The bride had written to her aunt to say in what week she would be home; but instead of arriving at the end of the week, as Miss Judith expected, the boat came in

at the beginning. None of the servants of the Hall were on the beach to receive her; her father and aunt were away that day making purchases at Walton, and did not know that the vessel had been sighted by the coastguard. Though her own relations and servants were not awaiting her, Josephine found that Richard had his friends on the shore, ready to shake hands with him, pat him on the back, and ask with a 'Halloo! old chap!' how he got along.

There was Joe Marriage, in wading-boots up to his thighs, and a dirty jersey of faded blue darned with black and brown, and a sou'-wester hat. His hands were fishy; he had been handling oysters. 'Well, Dick! Brought your missus home? Look alive, and introduce us to the lady.' Then, extending a very dirty flat hand, he grasped and shook that of Josephine: 'Glad to see ye, ma'am. Going to make a gentleman of Dick, are ye? 'Tain't possible, say I.'

Then up came Sam Bucket, and slapped Josephine on the shoulder. 'So, missus! you're back right with your chap. Not made him look much thinner. Which is it to be? Are you a-going to haul Dick Cable up to your level, or be you a-coming down to ourn?'

A gawky young fisherman, Tom Dowse, came staggering up with a pail of shrimps and set it down at Josephine's feet. 'There, my dear,' he said. 'You may take it home and sup on it, and be heartily welcome.'

'Come, missus,' said Jonas Flinders, who was half-drunk, 'you're one of us now, you know, and so shake a flapper. No damned airs;' and then he made a broad joke which brought the colour to Josephine's cheek. The rest laughed; Richard did not hear it; he was shaking hands and receiving congratulations from one of the coastguard, a few paces off. Jonas meant no offence; he would have used the same coarse expression before his own wife and daughters unrebuked. It was customary in his class of life for men and women and lasses to be outspoken, and not mealy-mouthed and nice about what was said or heard.

Josephine drew back. She was offended, and one or two of the others saw she could not stomach such talk; so they explained that Jonas was fresh, and when fresh, a loose-tongued chap, but good-hearted, and a fine sailor.

'If some of you will carry my traps to the Hall,' said Josephine stiffly, 'you shall be paid for it.'

'O hang it!' said one, 'we'll carry your parcels without payment; but we'll make so free as to ask you to give us a glass of grog in your kitchen to drink your health and success to your voyage of life with Dick for your captain.'

Josephine again looked round for her husband; but as he did not come to her, she moved away towards her home. One of the men had her bundle of rugs; another hoisted a portmanteau on his shoulder; a third carried a roll of umbrellas, waterproofs, and a yellow railway novel; and a fourth tucked a tin bonnet-box under his arm. The tiresome, tipsy Jonas would keep near her and talk in a familiar manner, and diffuse about him an odour of stale tobacco and beer. Escorted by these men, sensible that she cut a ridiculous figure, annoyed by the well-intentioned importunities of Jonas, vexed that none of her own servants were at the landing-place to receive her parcels, Josephine approached her home not in the best of tempers. As she entered the grounds, her father and aunt arrived in an open carriage. He was driving; and he drew up and waited, with an amused expression, till she came near, when Jonas, tripping on the stone in the entrance gates that received the bolt of the double doors,

sprawled in her way at her feet, and sent the pail of shrimps he carried over, so that the creatures were scattered in all directions over the drive. His accident elicited a general roar. Josephine turned a deeper colour than the shrimps.

'Where is Mr. Cable?' she asked impatiently.

'Lor, missus!' shouted Jonas, trying in vain to recover his upright position, 'dang it —he's gone after his kids, o' course, like a loving father to his poor orphans.'

'Come along, my men,' said Mr. Cornellis, with a laugh which cut Josephine like a knife. 'Round to the back-door, please, and I will order you all out some ale. The front-door is only for Mr. Cable, by permission of his wife.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOME?

'We dine at half-past seven. The rector and Mrs. Sellwood are coming. They have that French Countess staying with them.'

'Very well, papa.—Are those dreadful men gone?'

'Hark! They are giving you three cheers. They will have to carry Jonas Flinders away in a wheelbarrow. He was tipsy when he came. He's a relation of Richard's, is he not?'

'No, papa,' said Josephine, colouring. 'Richard has no relations here.'

'I am glad of that. I made a mistake. He is a kinsman of the first Mrs. Cable—brother, if I am not misinformed, of the deceased Polly. I am glad the tie is no more than that. It would have been awkward to have a drunken brother-in-law, or something of that sort, demanding his entrée. Even as it is, I foresee some awkwardness—he will

come to visit Richard, if he does not force his presence on you. It will be as well to let him understand always to go round to the back when he calls.'

An hour passed before Richard Cable came to the Hall. He hesitated about entering by the front and without ringing. He suddenly felt that he was in an awkward position. His wife was Squiress of Hanford, lady of the manor; the mansion belonged to her, and he —he would not be master in the house, and in that great house would probably feel uncomfortable. Home to him was a cottage with a big back garden, and a vine running over the low roof, a kitchen in which the meals were not only cooked but also eaten, and a little bedroom with the stairs opening into it; and a lean-to roof where all the rafters showed. He stood in the porch, supported on pillars, put his hand before his mouth, and coughed. The glass window was open, and he looked into the hall; it had a polished oak floor inlaid in patterns. There was a billiard-table in it. There were carved cabinets, with yellow and blue Japanese vases on them, and crimson cloth curtains before the staircase which opened out of the hall. Mr. Cable ventured a little way within and coughed again. Then, frightened at his own voice, he

retreated into the porch, and examined the white jessamine that trailed up it. If he were to go in—he would not know his way about the house. It seemed too absurd to ring the bell, and hardly proper for him to go round to the kitchen.

Richard Cable was a shy man when out of his proper element and among those he did not know intimately. Brave at sea and in any peril, he was timid on land when placed in situations with which he was unacquainted. He was a humble man, with much self-diffidence, and only strong when he thought he was doing his duty. As he stood in the door, duty was neither before him nor behind him, on this side, nor on that; and he was perplexed. He put his nose to the jessamine, and thrust his hands into his pockets. He knitted his brows and considered. Now he wished he had come along with Josephine directly after landing; then he could have entered the house at her side and taken his proper place; but the strong hunger in his heart to see and clasp the dear golden heads had carried him away, and he had missed his proper opportunity.

Something must be done, he said, and drew his nose away from the jessamine. He pulled his right hand out of his pocket, took

off his glazed hat, and walked boldly into the hall, where he began to hum a tune, and he hung up his hat on the peg near the door. He snuffed up a pleasant odour. It is a remarkable phenomenon that the smell of dinner invariably goes where it is not wanted, and where it ought not to be. It is not smelt in the kitchen, where it is cooked; but it travels into the bedrooms; it pervades the staircases; it penetrates to the drawing-room; and it meets those who are about to partake of the dinner, at the entrance of the house. Architects rack their brains, engineers scheme, to circumvent the smell of dinner—all in vain. It will not be circumvented. It has been known to come out of the house by the kitchen chimney, scramble down the roof, and take up a position, from which nothing can drive it away, a quarter of a mile off at the lodge-gates. Now, if it were only the vanilla flavouring of the blanc-mange, or the cinnamon for the stewed pears, or the ratafia for the trifle, that thus announced itself, no one would object; but these delicate essences are elbowed away and down-trodden by the coarser savours of boiled cabbage and cauliflower. Woe betide the householder if he keeps pigs, and his factotum induces him to boil potatoes for the sty. The smell of those

potatoes becomes a thick reek in every portion of his house; and by that perversity which orders the events of life, the pig potatoes are certain to be boiling when distinguished, even titled, visitors call on us, and it sends them away after a curtailed call, impressed with the belief that our sewers are out of order.

Richard Cable was hungry; and the smell that saluted his nose was grateful. He thought at once, with a softening of the heart, that Josephine had considered him, and was doing a chop or a rasher for him. His mother had desired to detain him, and had promised him supper; but he would not stay with her, because he thought his duty called him to the side of Josephine. As he was venturing hesitatingly across the hall, he heard a door slam, heard a step, and at once, overwhelmed with terror, ran back to the porch, but not before the butler had caught sight of him, and came after him, with a: 'Now, then! What are you doing here? Trying to take off a greatcoat, eh? One of them drunken rascals as have been in the kitchen, I'll be bound.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Richard, standing still, and becoming red as fire, whilst his nether limbs shook; 'I'm—I'm the husband

of Miss Josephine, sir. That is—sir, I'm Mr. Richard Cable.'

'I'm very sorry, sir, very sorry,' said the butler, his face altering immediately. 'I did not see at first; I thought it was an intruder, and I wasn't sure what he might be up to.—O sir, here come the rector and the ladies.'

The door was darkened by the arrival of the guests.

'There's dinner, sir, immediate, if you'd run upstairs and dress. I'll tell cook to put it off five minutes.'

'Dress!' exclaimed Richard, startled, and casting a hasty glance about himself to see if by accident any portion of his garments had not been put on.

'Upstairs, right-hand side of passage, first door, is your dressing-room, sir,' said the butler, covering him from the visitors.

'But I don't want a dressing-room, sir!' remonstrated Richard. 'I'm in my togs.'

'What! Cable!' called the rector, coming forward. 'Did not expect you here. Did not know that you had returned; wish you joy and happiness. But—I see just off the water, and I'm detaining you from dressing.'

Richard ascended the stairs in a puzzled state of mind, and walked on the side, not in the middle, lest he should dirty the pretty red

carpet that ran down the stairs. When he came to the top, he looked about him. 'First door on right hand,' he said, and went to one, but was doubtful whether it were the right door, for the butler had said something about a passage. He saw no passage. He stood hesitatingly at the door and coughed. Then he put his hand on the handle, but doubted whether he ought to open, fearing this might be the wrong room, so he coughed again and tapped faintly at the door. Instantly it flew open, and Josephine appeared in white satin with lace and orange flowers, and a few pearl-gray silk bows, as a compliment to the memory of Cousin Gabriel, as an acknowledgment that she was in mourning. She looked very lovely in her evening dress; it was her bridal dress made into one for the evening.

'Good gracious, Richard! you're not dressed!' she exclaimed, and stepped back.

'Not dressed!' he said with a stupid stare. 'You're the third person who has said this, and yet—I—I can't believe it. I know I am in my togs.'

'O Richard! how late you are. Be quick—you will keep everyone waiting. *Do* dress.'

'Dress!' he exclaimed, becoming desperate. 'What more will you have? Shall I put on my greatcoat?'

'Good gracious!' said Josephine, putting her hand to her chin, 'merciful heavens! I don't believe you have got any clothes!'

'Feel me,' said Richard, 'if you cannot believe your eyes. I've got my suit on.'

'But not your dress suit. Goodness! what is to be done! I never thought about a set of evening clothes for you. I really supposed you might have provided all that for yourself.'

'I've got the frockcoat in which I was married,' said Cable, 'and the lavender thing-um-jigs, and a yellow nankeen waistcoat. What more do you want?'

'Get into that,' said Josephine hastily; 'there is no help for it. I really must go down. The rector and Mrs. Sellwood have come.'

About ten minutes later, Richard Cable was heard coughing outside the drawing-room door. He was shy of entering, and stuck there hesitating, hearing the voices within, till the butler came to his aid and precipitated him into the parlour. Then he stood bewildered, looking vacantly about him, till the rector came to his aid and conveyed him into the middle of the room.

Josephine looked keenly at him, and almost wished he had come in his dark-blue sailor

suit, which became him, instead of cutting the preposterous figure he did. In his nautical dress, he looked so handsome, such a frank, manly fellow, so every inch one of nature's gentlemen; but now—in the black frockcoat and lavender trousers, uncomfortable, shy, ungainly — and — O horror of horrors! without having changed his shirt, with the old coarse linen collar and front, clean but crumpled—and—and—— Josephine was in the midst of a conversation in French with the Countess de Marluche, whom the Sellwoods had brought with them, when she lost the thread, forgot what she was saying, forgot the subject about which she was conversing, in her consternation at the figure her husband cut among well-dressed ladies and gentlemen.

'Dinner is served,' said the butler.

She recovered herself at once, and said to the Countess: 'We are just off the water. Our yacht only arrived a few hours ago, and we have to ask your indulgence if we appear in picnic guise.'

Then she saw Aunt Judith looking at her, and the rector came over towards her. She was startled. She had forgotten that she, not her aunt, was the lady of the house. Her father turned to Richard Cable, and said: 'It

is your place, Mr. Cable, to take in the Countess—will you lead the way?'

Josephine cast an appealing look at her father; but he took no notice of it.

Richard was obliged to give his arm to the French lady and lead the way. He was followed by Mr. Cornellis with Mrs. Sellwood; then came Captain Sellwood and Aunt Judith; lastly, the rector and the bride.

Captain Sellwood maintained an imperturbable face. He would not have come, had he known that Josephine had returned. Mr. Cornellis had begged him to make one of the quiet dinner that evening, quite a family party, no strangers. In the little society of Hanford, scarce a week passed without a small dinner of this sort, cosy little dinners, where old friends met again and again at each other's houses. As the Cornellis family were in mourning, recent mourning, of course they gave no parties; but these small unceremonious dinners did not count.

When Richard, with the French lady on his arm, arrived in the hall, he stood still, put his hand to his mouth and coughed. 'By George,' he said, 'I don't know the bearings.'

'This way, sir,' explained the obsequious butler, bowing at the dining-room door. Then:

'Excuse me, sir; you're at the wrong end of the table—up the room, sir.'

'We shall get right at last, ma'am,' said Richard to his companion. 'I hope you're as ready as I am to play a good knife and fork.'

'Mais! malheureusement! monsieur, je ne parle que fort peu l'anglais.'

A goose was in front of Richard. He stood up to carve it, and turned back his cuffs. 'I daresay the old lady is hungry,' he said to himself in his kindly thoughts. 'I'm sure in her foreign country she don't get such solid food as in England. We didn't, I know;' so he helped her to the leg of the goose.

'Mais, monsieur, je vous prie!—c'est un peu trop!'

'Too much?' So he sliced the leg in half, and served her the drumstick.

'There's stuffing, sir,' said the butler confidentially in his ear.

'Is there, sir?' answered Richard. 'How the blazes am I to get at it? It is not often we've had a chance of carving a goose, I can tell you.'

Josephine looked on in terror, lest he should splash the gravy about the table, possibly over the Countess; but Richard had a hand at once too firm and gentle for that.

Though he had no great experience in carving, he managed fairly well, only that he gave enormous helpings to every one, generous helpings, because he wished all to have enough, and he measured all appetites by his own.

He made a few attempts at conversation with the Countess, but could not succeed; her knowledge of English was rudimentary, his knowledge of French was *nil.*

Josephine was fortunately saved the effort of making conversation at her end of the table, because she sat by the rector, who could and did talk whenever he had a chance. She was at leisure, whilst half-listening to his voice, to watch her husband's face. It wore its usual kind and honest expression, but it was troubled. He was uncomfortable, willing to do his best, desirous to do his duty, but ignorant as to what he ought to do, and bewildered by the strangeness of the situation in which he found himself.

Even whilst speaking to the rector, Josephine's eyes became dim with a mixed emotion—vexation that Richard should cut such an absurd figure, and pity for him, because she knew he was suffering. Then she felt her brow become warm, for the great solemn eyes of the captain—after having rested on Richard for a moment whilst he finished his gravy with

his knife, putting it into his mouth—turned and looked at Josephine, and at once dropped.

'Dick will need some taking in hand,' thought Josephine; 'he is better at sea than on land.'

If Richard Cable had been a bumptious man, one with much self-assurance, he would have talked and joked and drunk his wine and felt quite at his ease, and gone to bed believing that he had made a good impression on the company; but Richard was a modest man, always mistrustful of himself where he did not see his way, very sensitive, and somewhat alive to the ridiculous. He was, though he did not know it, so thoroughly a gentleman at heart, that he shrank from intruding where he was unqualified to take his place. Now, in society, into which he was cast headlong, at a dinner, of a sort with which he was quite unfamiliar, dressed differently from the other gentlemen, and knowing that he did not look well in his clothes, he was troubled and frightened, and only partly recovered himself when the ladies had left the room, and the rector took his glass and came over to the end by Cable, as he did not attempt to come to the rector's end. The rector was a man of the world, and could get on with any one. He at once

began to speak about the cruise in the yacht, and having got Richard on a familiar subject, with great forbearance encouraged Cable to talk, instead of doing all the talking himself.

When Cable spoke of anything that he understood he spoke well, straightforwardly and intelligently. The rector kept him in the dining-room a long time. He was interested in the cruise of the 'Josephine.' Perhaps he saw that it was a kindness to keep his host there, conversing on what he could talk about, instead of bringing him into the drawing room and the society of the ladies.

'Shall we rejoin the ladies?' asked Mr. Cornellis.

'No hurry, Cornellis,' answered the rector. —'What capital port this is! I'll have another glass. Mrs. Sellwood must be allowed her nap.'

When, about eleven o'clock, the guests were gone, and Mr. Cornellis and Aunt Judith had retired, then for the first time since they had landed, Josephine and Richard were alone together. She closed the piano and blew out some of the candles and turned down the lamp. Richard was standing at the chimney-piece with one hand on the marble mantel-shelf, looking at the French ormolu clock. His head was slightly bent; he was immersed

in thought, just as many a time he had stood at night resting his hand on the bulwarks of his lightship in a dream.

'What is it, Richard?' asked Josephine, going up to him.

'I was thinking—it is half-past eleven—of the little bedroom at home where mother and all my children are now asleep, and the angels watch them.'

'Home!' said Josephine reproachfully. 'This now is your home. Is it not beautiful?'

'This—home!' He looked round with dazed eyes. 'Home?'

'Of course, Richard.'

'Home?' He shook his head. 'If I was dead and gone to another world, I reckon at first I should feel a bit muddled. In time, maybe, it will come—not all at once.' And as he went upstairs, he wondered in his heart whether he could ever come to feel there—in that grand house, among those strange people—at home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FISH OUT OF WATER.

'WARM, sir, or cold?' asked the boy who assisted the butler, cleaned the boots, and was generally useful about the house.

'Warm or cold *what*?' asked Richard in return.

'Please, sir, your bath. A can of warm water, or all cold, sir?'

'I don't want neither.—Bath!' exclaimed Richard—'bath! I ain't a baby to be tubbed. —And who are you? Are you sent to tub me?'

'Please, sir, every gentleman has his bath every morning, sir. Mr. Cornellis always do.'

'Every morning!' gasped Cable. 'Mercy on us—every morning! I'll have it neither hot nor cold. Take that flat pan away.'

Richard Cable's early hours surprised the household. In England, we are not early risers; we prefer the fag-end of the day to the prime of the morning. We neither rise

with the sun nor set with him. The English day is like the calendar before the new style was adopted, it is wrong with the sun. The scullery-maid was startled one morning to find the master laying and lighting the fire in the kitchen, to save her trouble; nor was the boy less astonished to find him in the boot-hole blacking his own boots.

'My dear Richard,' said Josephine that same morning, 'what dirty hands you had at breakfast! What had you been doing?'

'Cleaning the boots—there are such a lot for that whipper-snapper of a boy.'

'You must not do that.—And, now I am on the subject, I have put a nail-brush in your washstand; would you mind using it?'

'Anything to please you,' answered Richard.

'And—by the way—you really must not call the butler, Sir; nor the housemaid, Miss.'

'Why not? They are as good as me.'

'It won't do; they only laugh at you behind your back. And don't address the boy as Young Shaver; that also is not quite right. —Do not be angry with me, Richard.'

'I'm not angry,' he said. 'It's enough to make me sweat.'

'Richard!'

'What is the matter now?'

'Be more choice in your expressions; say perspire.'

'I only mean that it puts me in a fever to think what I ought to do and what I ought not to do. It's like what they do to lunatics —put 'em in strait-waistcoats. I seem to be in one now, and you a-lacing of me up as tight as ever you can. I'll get to like it in time, maybe, but it ain't easy at first.'

'If you do not mind my speaking,' pursued Josephine, 'there is one little matter more. You managed to cut those ribs of mutton well enough last night; but you should not take the end of the chop in your hand and pick the bone with your teeth. You cut off all the meat with the knife, holding the bone with your fork.'

'But I couldn't get it all off.'

'Then send it out, cleared with the knife, as well as you can.'

'It's wicked waste.'

'I tell you it won't do. Then you wiped your fingers on your whiskers.'

'Where else would you have me wipe them? Not on the tablecloth, surely?'

'Of course not—on your napkin.'

'But that is so beautifully clean, it is a pity to dirty it.'

'It can be washed.—Richard, it won't do; the whiskers were not given to a man to clean his greasy fingers on. I saw my father laugh, and my aunt did not know which way to look. The butler ran out of the room and exploded in the hall.'

'Well,' said Cable cheerfully, 'I gave 'em a good laugh, and I'm glad of that. That butler chap seems solemn as a Methody parson. He don't seem to me like a proper human being, but to be a doll moved by clockwork. I'll try him some evening. He and I'll have a pipe and grog together, and I'll tell him some of my good stories, and see if I can't make him jolly.'

'You shall do nothing of the sort, Richard,' said Josephine sharply: 'I cannot have you demean yourself to the level of the servants.' Then seeing that he was hurt, she regretted the tone in which she had spoken, went to him, put a hand on each of his shoulders, and looking into his troubled face, said: 'Richard, I've been considering about the little ones. It won't do to have them living away in another house. It will make me jealous, for you will be always running away from me to be with them, and you will come to regard that cottage as your home, not this. Besides, if you are to break with the past

mode of life, it will be best to do this altogether and at once.'

'Give up the cottage?' exclaimed Richard, and his face expressed distress.

'You will bring all the dear children here.'

'Yes,' said he, musing; 'they will like the garden; it is very pretty; but it won't quite be like the old one, neither to them nor to me.' A look of pain was in his kind face. 'But, when the grapes are ripe, we'll go there and picnic whilst I cut the bunches.'

'There are better grapes in the houses here. The sweet-water and muscat——'

'Ain't equal to the home grapes, I'll swear,' said Cable. 'Bless me! it ain't the quality; it's the where they grows.'

'Where they grow, not grows. "They" is plural, not singular.'

'That's all,' he said in a tone of depression.

'I am afraid I interrupted you.'

'I was only thinking what larks it was—me up the ladder cutting the grapes and passing 'em down to the children; and I don't believe any other grape could taste as sweet and look as lovely as did those black Hamboros—not to the children. They growed——'

'Grew,' interjected Josephine.

'They growed,' Richard went on, disregarding the interruption, 'over the roof what

all them little golden heads lay under; and I used to say that was how the bunches ripened on all sides alike. Above was the sun, and under were those six little sunny heads and hearts, warming the roof above. The black Hamboros couldn't do other than ripen under the circumstances, and be sweet as sugar-cane.'

'There is only one difficulty in the matter that occurs to me,' said Josephine, 'and that is about your mother. She would hardly like to come and live here with us. She would feel out of her element at our table and in the drawing-room; and yet, she will not like to leave the children. I have thought of engaging a nurse and a girl to attend to the children. But your mother—what is to be done with her? You see, she would be a difficulty if she associated with us; and we could not suffer her to associate with the servants. I am puzzled what to do.'

'Never think that she will come here,' said Richard. 'I don't believe she'd other than suffocate—not that she's asthmatical; but I fancy there's something here might take the breath away and kill her. I feel it; and I'm young. There ain't a room in the house where I can properly stretch my legs and arms, big though they be, and I could do it in my little lean-to bedroom at the cottage.'

'What do you say, Richard, to her going into the lodge? She need not open the gate when carriages come; she can keep a girl to do that. There she will be near the children, and yet not in the house. I suggest this because I think it would suit all of us.'

'Don't ask my opinion,' said Richard sadly; 'it's a queer turnabout. When you came to me, you asked me to guide and pilot you; and now it is I, not you, am in unknown seas, and I know no more what to do and where to go than if I was in the desert of Sahara. It is you are pilot, not I. What you say is to be done—I must do; and where you say I am to turn my bows, there I steer.'

'Will your mother consent to come to the lodge?'

'I dare say, if you wish it. She's a proud woman, and would not like to intrude where she is not wanted. She's not been here yet, and will never come uninvited. She was born and bred in that lodge, and there her father's body was brought when he was drowned, and there her mother died. It will be to her a home because of all the memories that cling about it. It is that which makes a home, miss.'

'You have forgotten—you must not call me miss.'

'Of course not. You're right, and I'm

wrong. I'm in that state of muddle that I don't know anything. I was saying that it is the memories that make a home. It isn't the sticks of furniture, nor the carpets, nor the pictures. 'Tisn't even the live beings you put into the place; it is all the thoughts and experiences, the sorrows and the joys that take a long time a-growing, but which will grow everywhere, if you allow them the proper time. Everything here is strange to me. I don't know my way about the house yet, and the ways of life are stranger still. I reckon that even bringing the little ones here will not make a home of it all at once. But with time and patience, it will come. I remember how it was with that black Hamboro. It was a little bit of a plant given me by Jonas Flinders before ever I married Polly, struck off the vine he had. It was nothing, but it growed——'

'It grew,' corrected Josephine.

'It grew,' said Richard, and touched his forelock. 'It grew beautifully, little by little, first the blade, then the leaf, and then the tendril and flower, and last of all the fruit; and it ran at a gallop when once it had got upon the roof, as if it could not grow fast enough.—Grow? No; grew.'

'No; quite right. "It could not grow; but, "it grew."'

'As if it could not grow fast enough, and cover enough of warm roof, and I had to pick off scores of bunches, or it would have made too many and exhausted itself. But, you understand, that was after a while, not all at once. So, perhaps, it is here. There are the cuttings put in, and we must wait for leaf and flower and fruit and the clinging tendrils—all that will come in due time, if it please the Lord. I'll bide in patience; I can't expect it all at once.'

Richard walked away, to talk the matter over with his mother. When he was out of the house and garden, by himself on the sea-wall, the cloud that had been hovering over his brow descended and darkened the expression of his face. Sometimes, whilst we are watching a glittering snow-wreathed Alpine peak, on which the sun is blazing, light clouds drift across the head and disappear; then others gather and cling, and by degrees the snows are enveloped in vapour, and what was fleecy becomes heavy, and what was white darkens to purple, and the whole sky is changed; the sun is no more seen, but thunder and rain riot about the mountain. It was not quite so with Richard Cable, but threatenings of a storm appeared. Whilst he was with Josephine, he had exerted great self-

control. A man sensitive and diffident, he was hurt by her correction of his mistakes, at the time that he acknowledged that he was liable to make mistakes. He wished to do what was right; but in the position in which he found himself, it was not possible for him to discover within himself the rules by which to act.

The rules of social life are to some extent arbitrary, or they are founded on conditions which a man of the people does not understand. They do not spring out of the eternal principles of right and wrong, but out of social adjustments and compromises arrived at by generations of culture. Consequently, Richard had as little knowledge of what to do, as a man who cannot swim knows how to save himself when out of his depth, with a current carrying him out to sea. He made mistakes, floundered about, was aware that he became ridiculous, and yet did not know how to avoid error, and where to find and how to put his feet on firm ground. To a man with self-respect, with strong sense of moral dignity, such a situation is eminently galling. Richard had avoided showing how he suffered, whilst he was with Josephine; but when he was by himself, the sense of humiliation, of irritation, and a brooding anger against no particular

thing and no one in particular began to overshadow and darken his spirit. Several times during his conversation with Josephine a flash had passed through his mind; but it was like summer lightning unattended by muttering thunder. Now his step had lost its even swing; he walked hastily and irregularly, as his humour altered. At one moment he was hot, and a quiver of anger ran through him; then he cooled, and his breast rose as he drew a long breath. He put up his hand to his brow. 'I sweat,' he said. 'I mean, I perspire; and I don't know whether I'm in an ague or what is on me. I never was like this afore. Well, 'tis disconcerting, when a tug that is signalled to, instead of tugging, is taken in tow.'

Josephine, after he had left, remained with her hands in her lap, looking out of the window at nothing, thinking about Richard. She was sorry that she had said so much to him about his mistakes; but really, she did not know where to begin with his schooling, there was so much to correct in his language and manners and habits. It was strange that she observed his want of refinement now, and that she had not noticed it before. Even on board the 'Josephine,' it had not been observable; it was only conspicuous when he

was out of his navy-blue sailor's jacket and loose trousers and flapping collar, and cap with the ribbons behind. What a fine fellow he was walking the deck! How was it that he cut such a grotesque figure in the drawing-room? She was provoked with him that he did not conform at once to more cultured life, and accommodate himself instinctively to the methods and modes of the class into which she had translated him. Then she beat down the feeling of vexation that rose in her heart, and reasoned with herself that she was demanding of him impossibilities. She was alive to his good qualities, but they were good qualities badly set. A diamond is nothing till it is cut and polished; the precious metals must be cleansed of their dross before they acquire their proper value. The roughness of surface, the inherent dross in Richard, were unpleasantly conspicuous, and the polishing, the purifying, could not be done all at once. She began to see that he would be useless to her as an adviser, and that she would be thrown back on her father, for lack of another. Her father had treated her with great forbearance, even kindness, since her final battle with him, since he saw that she was resolved to carry her point. He had not reproached her since; he had not taken ad-

vantage of the opportunities Richard had given him for letting her see that he was out of place. He did his best to thrust Richard forward—to insist on his occupying the principal position in the house; he showed deference to him, and himself kept in the background. This was a little provoking occasionally, because Cable was incapable of taking the lead, and wanted support and direction, which Mr. Cornellis, with apparent delicacy, refrained from tendering.

Richard Cable had but just returned from the cottage, and had rejoined Josephine in the garden, to tell her the result of his interview with his mother, when a handsome carriage and pair, with liveried coachman and footman, drove in at the gates and drew up at the porch.

'Good gracious!' said Josephine, 'there is Lady Brentwood.—Richard, do be on your *P*s and *Q*s.'

'On my what?'

She had no time to explain, as Lady Brentwood had seen her and was waving her parasol to her.

Josephine ran to the carriage-door, and was followed by her husband. 'Richard, help Lady Brentwood down.—Let me introduce my husband, dear Lady Brentwood.'

Lady Brentwood was a tall fine woman, with almost white hair, and dark eyebrows, which she raised and depressed in a manner that made the person she was speaking with think she was being stared at and quizzed. Lady Brentwood was not above taking stock of the person she conversed with; but she was incapable of doing what was rude. The fact of her eyebrows being very marked and dark, and of the trick she had of throwing them up and then bringing them down again, and screwing up her eyes, gave her the appearance of being a quiz.

'Have you come a long way, ma'am?' asked Richard. 'Would you like some beer? There's a good cool tap. I'll run and fetch you some at once.—No, ma'am?—I'm sure you look tired.'

'Thank you, Mr. Cable,' said Lady Brentwood, her eyebrows very elevated, and this time with real amazement. 'I will ask your wife for a cup of tea.'

'Only make you hotter, ma'am,' said Richard.—'But stay. Your coachie and flunky, I'm sure, won't object to a glass of beer; I'll run and fetch it them. They look to me broiling on the box—and——'

He turned sharply round to Josephine. 'What is it? Why are you pinching me?'

'I am not.'

'You were.'

She frowned, and signed with her eyes and mouth.

'Of course the lady will be glad that her chaps should have a glass. Are you not, ma'am? It's kindly meant; their tongues are almost hanging out of their mouths with thirst, like running dogs.'

Josephine sighed. How she then wished she were cast with Richard on a desert island. They might be happy together there, but not in England. 'Shall I ever be able to get my cub licked into shape?' she asked herself, and sighed again. 'I believe my father was right; I have made a fatal mistake.'

CHAPTER XXV.

LAVENDER.

'My dear,' said Lady Brentwood, 'you know me—you know what I am—the most obstinate creature in the world, only to be paralleled with the donkey, especially when set on wickedness. Now, I have set my heart on something tremendously naughty. I'm going to carry you and your husband off for a night, at once. I will take you away with me in my carriage. I've got Admiral Fitzgibbon, and Mr. Jenkyns, who is one of the Lords of the Admiralty—and, *entre nous*, knows no more about ships than an opossum —coming to dine with me, and I want your husband to be with us. He knows all about nautical matters; he has them at his fingers' ends; and Mr. Jenkyns will be thankful to meet him. My dear, these public men always remind me of eating crab. They like to take a good intelligent and experienced skull and sit over it, and pick at the flesh and brain,

and mix and put pepper and mustard and vinegar to it, and stir, and then eat and enjoy. Mr. Cable will be a perfect crab to the Lord of the Admiralty. Your husband is a specialist in his way. You see I am horribly selfish and savagely frank. I tell you everything. The fact is, I want to make an agreeable dinner-party, and I know that your good dear husband is the dish of dishes for Mr. Jenkyns and Admiral Fitzgibbon.'

'Where is the wickedness, ma'am?' asked Richard, much surprised. 'If I can be of any use, or agreeable to any one, I'm heartily willing.'

'My dear Mr. Cable—is it not cruel—barbarous—to drag you and Josephine away just after your arrival, before you have had time to turn about and shake down?—before you have unpacked all the treasures you have picked up on your wedding tour?—before you have arranged the pretty presents given you on your marriage? Upon my word, I am ashamed of myself; but there—I am the most selfish woman in the world.' Up went her eyebrows. 'I have told you my reasons; I play with my cards on the table.'

'Why, ma'am,' said Richard Cable, 'I don't see that this is cruel of you, not barbarous at all, but very kind. Some folks,

when they do a pretty thing, make a deal of palaver about it. But you, ma'am, as I judge, do a kind thing, and try to make it seem as if it was you who were favoured, and not we.'

Lady Brentwood raised her eyebrows; she was touched with the simplicity of the man: but Josephine thought the raised brows meant that she was amused at his simplicity and was inwardly laughing at it; so she said hastily: 'You are indeed most kind—but you are always kind.' She cast a look at her husband, intended to bid him hold his tongue and leave the conduct of the affair to her. 'But——'

'I will take no *buts*,' said Lady Brentwood. 'I have Mr. Cable on my side, I am sure.'

'Well, ma'am,' he began again; but Josephine cut him short.

'I shall be very happy, dear *Lady* Brentwood'—she looked at her husband indignantly as she emphasised the title of her visitor—'I shall be only too pleased to be with you; but, unfortunately, my husband cannot accompany me.'

'Why not?' asked Lady Brentwood with pursed lips and raised brows.

'You see, he has so much to attend to just at present—about the yacht. There are the men.' An idea flashed through her head. 'They are to have their supper to-night, and

it would perhaps hurt their feelings if Richard did not attend.'

'Can you not postpone the supper?'

'Hardly. I suppose the goose is killed and stuffed. The men will be paid off and dispersed.'

'But, my dear, we have a lawn-tennis party to-morrow, and Mr. Jenkyns leaves to-morrow morning. It is such an opportunity. I really have set my heart on introducing the Admiral and Mr. Jenkyns to your husband. You know Admiral Fitzgibbon? His wife is a charming woman, the daughter of Lord Arthur St. Clair.'

A dinner at Brentwood Hall! Her husband encircled by an exalted naval officer, a Lord of the Admiralty, gentlemen of county position, ladies of high degree and perfect polish, all quizzing and observing. The idea to Josephine was intolerable. She thought of him sitting on the edge of a chair with his knees wide apart, and his great red hands on each knee, his elbows stiff, his boots shapeless, his face brown. She thought of him cutting his bread, holding the knife at the junction of the blade and the haft, and cutting the bread against his thumb. It would never do. If he were resolved to go, she would stay at home. The colour mounted to her cheeks.

'Impossible, I do assure you, dear Lady Brentwood. You must really excuse him. In a little while it will be different. My husband will be more free; now, his hands are tied. There are'—she hesitated—'reasons which make it necessary for him to stay; but I will attend you, if you will put up with poor me.'

'My dear,' said Lady Brentwood, laughing, 'the lavender will flourish here.'

'Lavender! What do you mean?'

'Do you know, Mr. Cable?' asked the visitor with a mischievous but good-humoured laugh.

'No, ma'am—I mean, my lady.' He caught his wife's eye. 'I don't see why lavender should not thrive here; it likes a sandy soil, and the sand comes out in the garden. I can't say I've observed any in the beds; but I'm partial myself to lavender, and I'll have some put in; leastways'—he corrected himself—'I have no doubt *she* will, and if she don't care to have it here, I can plant some in the cottage garden.'

'Oh,' said Lady Brentwood, laughing, and with elevated eyebrows—'oh, the lavender will grow here.'

Josephine winced, and was hot. What did her visitor mean? Was she poking fun at her?

'You do not know?' asked Lady Brentwood. 'I'll tell you all about it in the carriage. Well, if it must be—I must swallow my disappointment. But what shall I do? These dear fox-hunters and sporting men will talk of nothing but runs and covers; and the Admiral and Mr. Jenkyns will perish with ennui. I am like the man of Macedonia who appeared to St. Paul and cried, "Come over and help us." You won't come—or you won't let Mr. Cable come to the rescue. I am disposed to turn sulky; but there—I will not press you, though I feel sure, if I appealed to Mr. Cable, I might carry my point. I can see it in his face. However, if the lavender is to grow, I will not interfere with its planting.'

Josephine's nerves were tingling; her finger-ends burnt as though she had touched nettles. On one side was Lady Brentwood torturing her; on the other her husband with infinite possibilities of *gaucherie* in him, and she did not know what he might say or do next moment. She started to her feet with a sense of relief when her father and Aunt Judith entered the room. 'Dear Lady Brentwood,' she said, and her voice, in spite of her efforts to control it, shook slightly, 'you must not try your powers of persuasion; you know

that you are irresistible. It is hard of me to ask you to receive me alone; but indeed my husband cannot, must not come. It is hard for me to attempt to entertain Lords of the Admiralty; but I have had my experience of sandbanks on which one may be cast away—and I can talk of that.' Then, at once, her temples flushed, as she thought that Lady Brentwood might suspect in these words a covert reference to her unfortunate marriage. 'Here is Aunt Judith! Whilst I get together my few effects, she will entertain you. Richard will come and help me. He is, what I am not, a neat packer. I bundle all my traps into the box, and sugar them over with pins. Come, Richard! You will excuse us, Lady Brentwood, I am sure.' Then she whisked out of the room, followed leisurely by Cable. She slid her hand up the banister, and clutched it tightly at every few steps with convulsive twinges. She was in a state of quivering nervous excitation.

When she reached her own room, she threw herself into an armchair and said imperiously: 'Pack my things. I will point out what I want.'

Cable, instead of obeying, stood before her with his head bent, his grave eyes fixed on her face. His brow was lined. Had there

been these furrows there before his marriage? Josephine had not observed them previously.

'What is the meaning of this?' he asked.

'Take your hands out of your pockets when addressing me,' she said, and fanned her hot face with her pocket-handkerchief.

He obeyed, and folded his arms. 'I do not understand what this means,' he said.

'Indeed!'—spoken contemptuously.

'Why do you object to my going with you to the lady's house, Josephine?'

'I will trouble you,' she said with voice shaking with anger—'I will trouble you to call me by my proper name. I am not Jŏss-ephine, as you are pleased to designate me. The patriarch is not, I believe, by the most illiterate, entitled Joss-eph, and I object to be called other than Jōsephine.'

He looked at her with distressed expression on his face. 'I did not think there was anything wrong'—he began, and drew his kerchief from his pocket.

Then she stamped with her feet together impatiently on the floor. 'For heaven's sake,' she exclaimed, 'put away that detestable spotted blue pocket-handkerchief, as big as a sail! It is vulgar, it is odious. I hate the sight of it. It turns me faint. Give it to Jane for a duster.' She was in that condi-

tion of irritation when every trifle exasperates. 'Please, open the window,' she went on. 'I am suffocating. Your boots have been greased at sea with rancid tallow; they will not take the blacking, and—they are insufferable.'

He went to the window, unhasped the casement, and threw it wide open, then stood looking out. He drew a long breath, inhaling the sea-air, fresh and free, that rushed in and fluttered the gauze valance of the dressing-table.

'You are right,' he said huskily; 'it is close in here. One can hardly breathe at all here—not in this room only, but in the parlour and the hall, on the terrace, in the garden, everywhere within the garden walls.'

In the window hung a brass cage that contained a bullfinch. Richard put his hand to the cage-door, unfastened it, and put in his hand.

'What are you about, Richard?' asked Josephine petulantly. 'Why do you not go on with the packing?'

He did not answer. The imprisoned bird had hopped on his finger. He drew his hand from the cage so steadily that the bullfinch did not attempt to leave his perch. Then he put his arm out of the window, and the bird

remained, turning its head about and uttering an astonished or pleased cheep!

'What are you doing?' cried Josephine, and started to her feet. Her call, or the vibration, alarmed the little bird; it spread its wings and flew away. 'What have you done!' burst forth Josephine, throwing herself again into her chair. 'My Puffles! my poor Puffles!'

'The room was close, and the bird could not breathe,' said Richard. 'I felt for the poor little wretch—a sort of fellow-feeling, I suppose.'

'Richard!' she said, half crying, 'this is too unkind, too cruel of you! You knew that I was fond of the bird; that is why you have deprived me of him. I will never, never forgive you.' Then the tears came into her eyes—not tears of sorrow for the loss of her pet, but of mortified pride and of angry resentment. Her flushed face, her pouting lips, her swollen muscles, all proclaimed wrath, not grief. 'I wish,' she muttered—'I wish that we had never——'

'What do you wish?' he asked, facing her.

'I wish——' But she checked herself. Then, thinking that his feet touched her skirts, she brushed the latter away and tucked them

under her knees, with passionate scorn in her action. 'Please, proceed with the packing. Lady Brentwood (*Ma'am*, as you call her) is not to be kept waiting an eternity, whilst you torment me with letting my pets loose. The horses have to be considered as well as she.'

'When do you return? To-morrow?'

'I do not know. I do not care if I stay a week to be free of my troubles.'

'What troubles?'

'O—troubles I have brought on myself—troubles past your comprehension.'

He said no more, but got out her box and began to pack. Whilst he was thus engaged he brooded on her words and said: 'I think I understand you.'

'I usually speak so as to be understood,' she replied.

'Josephine,' said he, 'why will you not allow me to go with you? I know very well that I am no company for grand folks. I'm like a plain horn-handled steel fork that has lost its way, and got among the silver in the plate-basket. God knows, I do not desire to push myself where I am not wanted; but the lady did wish to have me.'

Josephine laughed contemptuously. 'Absurd! She did not want you, except as Samson, to make sport before the Philistines.'

'I do not believe you. The world is not so bad as you suppose.'

'Lady Brentwood was not sincere; she was laughing at you all the time she spoke with us.'

He shook his head. 'She's got a kind face and a kind way, and I don't think so bad of her as that. As for the Lords and Admirals! I'm not afraid of them. Men, be they ever so high, always know the wally of a true man.'

'Wally!' groaned Josephine. Then in a tone of bitter mockery she said rapidly: 'O generation of wipers! Pass the winegar.'

'What do you mean?' he asked, rising from her box on which he was engaged, and standing before her, with his face red, the veins in his forehead distended and purple. 'Are you laughing at me? Scoffing at me, Josephine?'

'I merely repeat things I have heard.'

'When—where?'

'Oh, the other day I overheard you teaching the children a text from Scripture that began, "O generation of vipers."'

'Well, I did not pronounce a word right, and so you scorn me? Is that about it?'

She shrugged her shoulders and made no

reply. Her heart was beating furiously. She linked one foot behind the other and kicked the footstool from her.

'The Lord's own words,' said Richard sternly. 'Even they aren't sacred to you, not when a father is teaching them to his little ones. What odds if the pronunciation of the words be wrong so long as the words themselves be right?' He knelt again at her box and finished packing.

When he had done, she stood up. The sting of self-reproach made itself felt in her heart; but she was too proud to acknowledge that she had been in the wrong.

'Richard,' she said, 'you may go. Ring the bell to have the box taken down. I must dress myself hastily.'

When she descended the stairs a few minutes later, she looked about for him, but did not see him. He was not in the hall, nor in the drawing-room. As she got into the carriage her eyes wandered in search of him; but he was not to be seen.

'Where is Richard?' she asked of her father.

He answered superciliously: 'He went loafing through the garden a minute ago.'

She settled herself beside Lady Brentwood.

'My dear,' said the latter, 'I am positive that lavender will thrive here.'

'What do you mean?'

'Do you not know? Where the wife rules, there the lavender flourishes.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

MOSQUITO STINGS.

When Richard left the house, he did not go to the cottage or to the yacht. He passed through the gate to the seawall, and stood outside the palisade of the garden, leaning against it, overshadowed by the boughs and fragrant flowers of a lime, looking out to sea. He could catch a glimpse of the drive; and as he heard the grind of the carriage-wheels on the gravel, he turned and looked, and saw Josephine depart with Lady Brentwood. Mr. Cornellis was also in the carriage. So, as he, Richard, was not suffered to go, Lady Brentwood had carried off Mr. Cornellis. In the opinion of Josephine, her father was suited to move in good society, to entertain Lords of the Admiralty; but her husband was not; he must be kept in the background, lest he should make himself ridiculous.

For the first time in his life Richard's bright and crystalline humour clouded. Perhaps he had caught the infection from his wife. He

tried to look up into the deep sky, but his cap did not shade his eyes; the brilliancy of the light dazzled him; besides, his eyes were burning. He rested them gloomily on the tufts of sovereign-wood and sea-spinach that sprouted between the stones at his feet. He had controlled himself before Josephine with an effort; now his chafed temper swelled and tossed within him like a race of angry sea round Hanford Point. Flakes of red drove across his face, like the foam-bows driven by the wind on the rushing tide. His muscles quivered and his pulses leaped. He could not go to the cottage till the first paroxysm of passion had passed away. A woman is glib with her tongue both in her mirthful and in her angry moods; she shoots out her words without much consideration. Her tongue is her natural weapon of defence. We would not blame her were she to use it only when attacked, in self-defence. The mosquito also has a sting; but it employs the barb not only to protect itself, but to goad those who sleep, or ignore its existence, into taking cognisance of its insignificant self. What a light and feathery being it is! how delicately slender, how buoyant on its transparent wings! As we lie on a bench in the sweet summer evening and look up into the skies, full of twilight, like silver resolved

into vapour, and our souls mount to the far-off stars, whilst the song of the nightingale chanting among the poplars fills our ears, hmm—hmm—whisp! in an instant our faculties are drawn away from the ideal and transcendental to a minute gnat that has perched on us. Our peace is gone; the poison has penetrated our veins; irritation intolerable ensues; we tear with our nails, but cannot tear the irritation away, though we tear till the blood flows. Does the sting cease to vex in an hour? Oh no! it lasts for days, and only slowly ceases to worry and anger us.

Why did the mosquito light on us? We offered it no menace; we were not even thinking of flies; we were far away among the stars. Can it be that it affords pleasure to the mosquito to stab and inject an infinitesimally small drop of the most aggravating of poisons into our blood? Can it be that the creature stings us out of envy, because we were in spirit among the stars, instead of occupying our minds with mosquitoes?

It is said that female poisoners have made victims out of mere wantonness, not because they bore spite, but because it afforded them gratification to display their power. It is perhaps the same with the mosquito. Was the Marchioness de Brinvilliers the last of the

female poisoners? By no means. The poisoners are as numerous now as ever; they fly about in clouds; they rise up out of every pool; they lurk under every green leaf; they hum in every room. Pshaw! We hulking men, what care we for these midges? Compare our size, our strength, the texture of our bones, the toughness of our skins, with theirs. It is absurd to suppose that we need fear and avoid them. Pshaw! What can a microscopic drop of poison effect in the great rivers of our blood? Pshaw! How can such flimsy, merry-minded little creatures pierce these tough hides? So we argue, and next moment are writhing and tearing ourselves, and crying out in pain, like Hercules in the garment of Deianira. I have been to an apothecary, and showed him my hands and face covered with mosquito stings, and asked for something to neutralise the irritation. He laughed in my face, and said there was no remedy. So there is no remedy for the sting of that other mosquito; there is no alkali yet found strong enough to neutralise the drop of venom found at the end of a woman's tongue, thrust into the blood—not, maybe, out of virulence at all, but out of playfulness, out of wantonness. O the hours, the days, the months of tossing, of torment, even of delirium, caused by one little word at

the point of a soft little red tongue, shot into the veins and curdling the heart—shot in, in a moment of vexation, without premeditated malice. We may run away from the tormentor, but we carry the poison with us. Perhaps the mosquito is surprised at the effect of its sting, and would recall the poison if it could; but it cannot; and it comes whirring its wings and tossing its plumy head and piping softly in our ears, asking to be allowed to apply its lips to the wound; but we shrink away, the lips frighten us—behind them lurks the sting. O ye mosquitoes, I pray you be pitiful towards us rude men! We are incapable of protecting ourselves. We cannot permanently abide behind mosquito-curtains. But, alas! what avails a cry for mercy? As long as the world lasts, women must sting, and men must weep; and the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep.

Richard stood under the flowering lime in which the bees were busy, leaning against the palisades, with heaving breast and hands clenched at his side, and brows that lowered and dripped with agony. Real physical pain was at his heart, a pain that affected respiration and pulsation alike, a pain that numbed his brain and hindered it from articulate thought. He had loved Josephine. An uncultured man looks up to a lady of refinement with reverence

and worship, such as she herself can hardly understand. To him she is something so ineffably perfect that he is ready to become her slave, and ask for nothing in reward for his fidelity and adoration but a smile. It is the most unselfish, ethereal, of all love. It is like that which the Minnesingers felt for princesses in whose courts, beneath whose footstools they knelt and sang. To Richard Cable Josephine had been such an ideal; he had looked up to her with infinite love, as to one unattainable; and yet in this looking up was associated a feeling of vast compassion for the girl in her loneliness, her ignorance of the highest aims of life, and a longing to touch her hand with respect and lead her into the right way. What a mistake he had made! He lead her! She had bewildered him, and he had lost his knowledge of the compass-points. He saw that he could be of no use to her, that he was to her an encumbrance and a source of daily irritation. She was out of ease when he was present; his voice scalded her ears; his attitudes offended her; his boots made him insupportable in her room. He set his teeth. A glimmer was in his eyes, like the light beneath a thunder-cloud. He would not bring his children into the house. They should remain with their grandmother at the cottage, and he would spend most of his

time with them, and teach them Gospel maxims —the Sermon on the Mount—without suffering her to overhear and scoff at his lessons. No; on no account should they be brought to the Hall, where they might learn to laugh at their father, for his brogue, his boots, his blue kerchief. In the cottage they were encircled with simple and healthy surroundings, and were taught to look up to and reverence their father. He would not have them reared to an artificial life, to be made young ladies of, wincing at his *V*s, and turning away their faces from his boots. He looked at these boots. They had been serviceable to him on many a rough night. It was true that the leather was greased, and perhaps the grease had not always been fresh. The boots had kept his feet dry when the waves washed the deck. Sailors cannot wear patent-leather dress boots.

Richard could endure a great deal; he was so humble, that he was ready to accept correction; he was so forbearing, that he could allow for the infirmities of the weak; but his patience had its limits. He could not endure the thought of becoming despicable in the eyes of his children. The notion that such an eventuality was possible had never before occurred to him; now it seemed certain, were his little ones to be brought into association

with his wife. He put his hand to his head. His rough strong hand was shaking as though he were recovering from a long illness. A qualm almost like that of sea-sickness came over his heart; indeed, everything swayed about and under him. His knees were weak, and would hardly support him. He laid a hand on the top of the palisade and rested his head on it. In a few moments the giddiness would pass away. He put out his other hand on the palisade and shut his eyes. Then he felt something alight on his finger and press it. He looked heavily up, and saw that Josephine's bullfinch had come out of the lime-tree and had perched on his hand. He shook the bird off; but little Puffles, after hovering about a moment, returned and realighted on his finger.

What did the bullfinch want? Was it already weary of its freedom and desired to be returned to its cage? Was it frightened at the vastness and complexity of the world into which it had been launched, and longed for the narrowness and simplicity of the world within bars? With Puffles it was other than with Richard. He chafed at the restraints which encumbered him on all sides, and the bird was frightened at its freedom. He looked at the bullfinch some time dreamily, wonderingly.

He held his finger very still, and the bird began to polish his beak on it. Puffles was pleased to grip a warm hand instead of cold twigs. The pressure of the little feet and claws sent a thrill of pleasure along Richard's arm to his heart. In it was an appeal to his protection; and like his mother, Richard's heart at once responded to the appeal of feebleness. He raised his head and put his other hand over the back of the bird. 'Come, Puffles!' he said; 'each to his proper element. You, to bondage. I—I—God alone knows when and how I shall escape!' Then he went in, through the garden, very gently, holding the little creature covered with his right hand, and walking evenly. The bird made no attempt at escape.

At the pantry window stood the butler and the boy, looking out, whilst polishing the silver and glass; and they chuckled as they saw him come along. No doubt he looked absurd, walking slowly with one arm extended, and the other covering the tiny creature that rested on his finger.

'It's o' no use winking at facks,' said the butler, 'or trying to disguise 'em. Master ain't an atom of a gentleman. He don't look it; he don't feel it.'

When Cable reached his wife's room, carry-

ing the little bird, he replaced the creature in its cage and looked about him. Well, it was not fair to her for him to give liberty to her pet without asking her leave. Perhaps he had aggravated her to speak more sharply than she intended; perhaps now she regretted what she had said.

'I'm glad the bird is back,' he said. 'She will be pleased, and think more kindly of me.' His angry mood gave way to gentler feelings. He saw that she had scattered her clothes about the floor as she had taken them off, and left her drawers and wardrobe doors open. He took up and folded her dress, shut the drawers and closed the wardrobe. 'I'm a porpoise in a whiting-net,' he said. 'What a different sort of place this is from my cabin in the lightship or my room at the cottage! No nicknacks there. Well, I suppose I must accommodate myself to my shell, as the chicken said that had to be hatched. I can't make my shell fit me like the lobster.'

When a cool leaf is applied to a wound, the fever ceases for a while, but the relief is only momentary. Presently the fire makes itself felt as hot as before. The calmness that had come over Richard lasted only so long as the pressure of the little claws remained on his finger. No sooner had he left the room, than his

pain and heat returned. The poison was in his blood. Little Puffles could not undo the mischief done by Josephine. The poison had penetrated to the heart.

He went out of the house once more, and through the garden to the seawall. As he walked he had his hands in his pockets; but suddenly recalling the offence he had given to Josephine by so carrying them, withdrew his hands and folded them before him. How many commandments were there, he wondered, in the social code? The moral was simple enough, contained in two tables. How would he ever master the many and complicated rules, many and complicated as the hieroglyphs of the Chinese tongue, where every word has its special character? A Chinaman learns to read as he learns to speak; from infancy, as his ear catches a sound, it is associated with a symbol to his eye. So a gentleman or a lady grows up amidst the intricacies of social life, and all its symbols and rules become familiar from early childhood. But was it possible for a man like Cable, in manhood, to enter into this sphere and speak and act according to its regulations? Was it not as impossible for him as to acquire Chinese writing and the Chinese tongue?

Then another current of thought set in

through his brain. His hands had strayed again to his pockets, and in them turned over a few coins. He was now without a profession. He earned nothing; with the exception of a few pounds in the savings-bank, he had nothing of his own; he would therefore have to apply to Josephine for money wherewith to feed and clothe and school his children—ay, and provide for his mother as well. There were small bills due to the grocer and dressmaker; there was the rent for the house. Must he go to his wife with these accounts and ask her to settle them? The thought was unendurable to a self-reliant, proud man. It galled him to the quick to think that his dear little ones, Polly's children, his mother, should be henceforth dependents, not on him, but on Josephine.

No; to this he would not submit. There was but one mode of escape from the difficulty—he must enter into some profession, in which he could earn sufficient for the support of his family. But for what profession was he now qualified? It must be one that was gentlemanly, or Josephine would oppose his proposition. And for a gentlemanly profession he was unsuited, because he was not by breeding a gentleman.

As he puzzled his head with these thoughts, he was roused by a slap on the shoulders from

a heavy hand. He looked round and saw Jonas Flinders.

'How are you, old boy?' asked his brother-in-law. 'By Jakes, I'm glad to come across you. You're all with the top-sawyers now, and we in the pit ain't fit to be spoken with, I suppose.'

'You are not just,' answered Richard composedly; 'I have never shown any pride.'

'Well, you're so engaged, we can't get a sight of you. Now you're coming on to the "Anchor," I hope? All your chaps from the "Josephine" are there. You're not going to give them the slip, I hope?'

Cable started. He had forgotten the supper to the crew. After all, Josephine was in the right; he must be present at that. If he absented himself, he would give offence. Why did she not simply say so, and not insult and wound him?

'I fancy you'd forgot about it. My stars! you've got too grand to remember such little matters.'

'I had been reminded of it. For the sake of attending the supper, I did not go out with my wife; but it is true that for the moment I had forgotten. I was busy with my thoughts.'

'I hope they were pleasant. It don't seem

as if they were, judging from your face. By gorra! as I came up, your face was a-twitching and a-wincing as if you'd been stung by some nasty wenomous creetur. But there — come along. Treat things unpleasant like Pharaoh and his host—drown 'em.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN THE 'ANCHOR.'

THE parlour of the 'Anchor' had a cosy look. Although the time of year was summer, yet on the coast the evenings were at times sufficiently cool to make a fire acceptable. On this evening a small fire of wreck-timber was smouldering on the hearth, emitting its peculiar gunpowdery odour, and the glow gave geniality to the little room, as a smile to a plain face. The window was small, with red curtains to it; and before the supper was over, the curtains were drawn and a lamp lighted. Some lumps of coal were put on the fire, bubbled and burst into puffs of flame.

Richard knew the room very well. He had often been in it, and had spent there many a pleasant hour. As he sat in it now, a sensation of relief came over him. He was once more among friends, among men of his own educational stamp, men he could understand, and who understood him; men who were not on

the watch to find fault with him, who respected, and did not look down on him. Richard had always been a sober man ; but he had been no teetotaler ; he took a glass with his mates, and made the glass last a long time. He had never been a sociable man, but had always been kindly, ready to listen to yarns, and patiently hear puzzle-headed arguments, and laugh at jokes, and take interest in the affairs of his comrades. He was no talker, but a capital listener. When asked for his advice, he gave it modestly, and made no remarks if it were not followed. Should the talk take such a turn as offended him, he showed his disapproval by rising and leaving the room. On one occasion only had Richard occasion to speak out, and that was when his brother-in-law intercepted his exit. Then he said gravely : 'I cannot bear it, mates—because of the little 'uns at home. When I'm with you smoking, I take the smell of the 'baccy home with me in my jacket ; but that don't hurt. But when I hear you talk this way, I'm feared lest the taint of it go home to my innocent children in my clothes. No offence ; I must go. There are six of 'em, and the youngest is a baby.'

Richard Cable, as all the men knew, was a long-suffering man, slow to take offence, and never giving it. That fellow must be uncom-

monly provoking who roused Dick to anger. He could bear much chaff, taking it good-humouredly, and he did not resent, though he disliked, a practical joke. How his comrades would have marvelled had they been able on that evening to see into his breast, at the fuming, tossing fever that there worked, kindled, stirred up by a woman's tongue!

'By Gor, Dick,' said Ephraim Marriage, the mate, when the steaming grog was brought on the table with the white clay pipes, 'I'm glad you've come. Jonas said we should see no more of you, now you'd gone away from us for ever; but I didn't think it; I knew you better.'

'Give us a paw, captain, over the table,' said a sailor, glowing with affection and animation at the sight of the spirits and hot water and sugar.

'Every wessel,' said Moses Harvey sententiously, 'is marked with the mark of the port to which she belongs; it is C.K. for Colchester, and C.R. for Chichester, and H.D. for Hanford; and wherever she may go, into whatsoever seas, a-trawling, or a-drudging,[1] or a-coasting, she's known by her marks whence she comes and to what she belongs. Now, mates, our

[1] 'Dredging' in the Essex fisherman's vernacular is 'drudging.'

good friend Cable was built and launched here at Hanford; and though he may cruise away into oceans and seas and spheres to us unbeknown, yet wherever he spreads his sail, there it will be known he don't belong to no ports or harbours of them there foreign parts or spheres, but to us: he's marked H.D. right over his bows, and got it writ in his inmost heart, in the log o' his good conscience.'

A rapping on the table, a clinking of spoons, a stamping of feet under the table, and a 'Hear! hear! hear! Right you are, Moses.'

'I've heard tell,' continued Harvey, stimulated by these tokens of approval, 'that in disturbed and warful times, wessels sail and traffic under foreign colours. But I don't care what colours our captain, Dick Cable, may hoist; we look to his letters, not his flag; and we recognise our old friend and mate by his H.D. on his bows.'

Renewed applause.

Cable's heart was soothed by these tokens of welcome and affection and regard. These men said what they thought, and spoke out the feelings of their hearts. There was no humbug in them; they were honest and true throughout.

Perhaps Josephine was right when she said

that Lady Brentwood had invited him to dinner only that she might laugh at him. Perhaps the Admiral, the Lord of the Admiralty, the Justices of Peace, the Baronet, would have been civil to him with their lips, to his face, to make jest of his manners and mode of expressing himself behind his back. He did not understand the ways of that class of life, and Josephine did. She belonged to it.

Then Cable stood up and pulled off his frock-coat, and put it aside on the cupboard. 'I can't bear to sit in it any more,' he said. 'It is like as if I were in a strait-waistcoat in an asylum. I'll sit with you, mates, in my shirt-sleeves, as I've no blue jersey.'

'You put off the gentleman along with the coat when with us, eh, Dick?' asked Jonas Flinders.

'I never was, and never shall be, a gentleman,' said Richard with a little warmth. 'The making of one is not in me—what with my pockets and my handkerchief and my *Wes.* I'm a plain man, always was, and always will be.—They tried to put my hands into gloves,' he went on, waxing hotter—'kid gloves they were; and I busted 'em right down the back, as I've seen a taut sail go in a squall. They tried to get my feet into fashionable boots, and I was like a cat in walnut shells, or a Chinese

lady, needing ladies'-maids to hold her up when she sets her foot to the ground.'

The men laughed. Richard, with shaking hand, refilled his glass. He was angry at the recollection of what he had undergone. He swallowed half the contents of his tumbler, and went on irritably; 'Whatever you do, mates, keep clear of polite society. It is like the Doldrums, where you never know which way the tide is running and from what quarter the wind will catch you.'

'Not much chance for any of us to get into it, captain,' said one of the men; 'the luck don't come to every one to marry an heiress.'

'Leave my wife out of the game,' said Richard hastily; 'I'm not alluding to her in any way. I'm speaking of polite society in general, and them as have the misfortune to swim in it. I've seen this day a bullfinch that wasn't content to live outside a cage, and liked to hop about from one dry stick to another. There are folks that have been bred and grown up in social cages, and they are only happy inside of them. Give them a little red sand, and a few drops of water and some chickweed and a lump of white sugar, and they are content. They don't care for the green trees and the free wind, and the grass twinkling with morning dew. All that is barbarous to them.'

Richard had become loquacious. The fire burned in his heart, an angry resentment against the new world into which he had been introduced, and for which he was unsuited; and his heated feelings relieved themselves in words. His pride, which had been broken down, reared itself again.

'It must be uncommon irksome,' said Ephraim, 'having to wear a coat to your back all day, as if you were in church or chapel eternally.'

'It is not only that—you are tied and encumbered in everything, Eph!' answered Cable. 'When David the shepherd-boy wanted to fight Goliath, King Saul must needs clap on his head his helmet, and wrap his breastplate over his breast, and put greaves of brass on his legs. Then David could not get along a step, and he said: "I cannot wear them—I have not proved them." It is much the same with me. They're a-girding me and an arming of me, brass here, brass there, brass everywhere, and I am nigh on crushed with the weight.'

'It must be terribly inconvenient,' said one man, 'to have to wear a good cloth coat and waistcoat and trousers at meal-time, and instead of enjoying your wittles, to be a-thinking and a-pondering and a considering all the time, lest

a drop of gravy or a bit of butter should come on the cloth and spoil it. Bless my soul! what it must be to have the mind a-travelling over one's person like an inwisible cloth-brush cleaning off the crumbs and specks all the time one is eating!'

'I suppose,' said another man, 'you've got to be wonderfully choice what you say?'

'That's another of the wexing things in polite society,' answered Cable. 'Did you ever hear Tom Catchpool tell of the juggler he saw in India? He saw a native conjurer dance blindfold among knives and razors stuck in the ground with the blades upmost, where a false step would have cut him to pieces. He danced for an hour and did not get a scratch. For why? Because he was brought up to it from a baby. It is just the same in polite society: there every blessed letter of the alphabet sticks on end, sharp as a razor, and I defy'—he beat his fist on the table—'I defy any man who has not been brought up to it to get along among them without getting gashed and spiked at every turn.'

'And,' threw in Moses Harvey, 'the wowels is the wust.'

'I've been aboard a wessel all my life,' said Cable grimly, 'but I can't pronounce *We* aright.'

'I suppose you live like a fighting-cock at the Hall?' observed Ephraim.

'There is enough there and to spare,' answered Cable. He emptied his glass. He flushed hot with the remembrance of the indignities he had undergone on account of his mode of eating. 'Polite society knows how to cook its food, but is mighty particular how you eat it. But there, mates, we've had enough about polite society. I've seen at Orford or Aldborough or thereabouts—I can't at the moment mind exactly where it was—a tree growing that folks say was planted upside down, and the roots have grown into branches, and the boughs have been converted into roots. That is what polite society is—the honest world turned topsy-turvy. You have my last word on it. God save the Queen!'

'When shall you be going another cruise in the "Josephine," captain?' asked Ephraim.

'I'll have Jim Cook to repaint the name of the yacht,' said Cable; 'she's not to be called the "Josephine" any more.'

'Change her name!'

'Ay, change her name. You see, mates, it's the name of my—my wife, and I don't care to have it in every man's mouth. Besides, we none of us speak it aright. There's properly no Joss in it at all.—But there; you need not

try to give it right. The name shall be altered to-morrow.'

'What will you call her, Dick?'

'The "Bessie"—that shall be her name henceforth.'

Then up stood Hezekiah Marriage, captain of a small oyster smack, and said: 'Fill your tumblers, gentlemen. I rise on my legs—on my hind-legs, gentlemen——'

He was interrupted by Cable, who exclaimed roughly: 'We are none of us gentlemen, I least of all, thanks be.—Call us mates.'

'Very well, Captain Dick,' said Marriage. 'I rise to my hind-legs, mates; I accept the correction with a grateful heart. We are not gentlemen; we don't belong to polite society; we are rough Skye terriers, every one of us. I rises'——He paused—he was not a fluent man. 'Gentlemen!—I ask pardon, I mean mates—you have not all got your glasses brimming, and the toast I rises to propose is one that demands the—the flowing bowl.' He cleared his throat noisily and looked round. His face was moist, the strain of elocution was enormous. 'I rises on my——'

'All right, Captain Marriage; you've been a-rising on them hind-legs a score o' times; keep up on 'em, and don't come down again,' said Jonas Flinders.

'Allow me to get along as I can,' entreated the speaker, 'or I shan't get along at all. I propose the full and flowing bowl to be emptied to the health of Mrs. Captain Cable, the real old and original Josephine.'

'I object!' shouted Richard, starting up and striking the table. 'I have said already that I will not allow my wife's name to be brought in. I refuse to permit the toast.'

'Having risen to my hind-legs to propose it,' said Marriage argumentatively, 'I can't a-draw it in again. Toasts are not like snails' horns.'

'I will not have it drunk,' said Cable angrily. 'Do you want to offend me and make me your enemy, Mr. Marriage? You all?'

'No offence is meant; the contrary was intended,' argued Hezekiah. 'How can there be offence in proposing or in drinking the health of Mrs. Cable?'

'I have said I will not permit my wife's name to be introduced here,' cried Richard. 'You have all heard me announce that.' He looked angrily round the table.

Was this the same Richard Cable whom all had known?—this irritable, touchy man? What had transformed his nature, once so placable? Only a drop of poison on a tongue-point introduced into his veins.

'Now, look here, mates,' said Marriage. 'The toast is out, and it is unconstitutional to haul it in again; but I'm a peaceable man, and I'll tell you how we'll compromise the difficulty—we'll drink the health of Mr. Cable and all his belongings.'

Richard was in that chafed temper that takes umbrage at trifles; but he saw that he had acted unreasonably, and he raised no further protest. The toast was drunk, but with an abatement of enthusiasm. Then he stood up to reply, having first fortified himself for the effort with his glass. 'Mates,' he said, leaning over the table, resting on his knuckles, 'I'm nought as a speaker, as you all know. I thank you for the cordiality with which you have drunk my health. As I said afore, so say I now; I'm not a gentleman, and never will become one. Silk purses are not made out of sows' ears. I daresay you've all heard of Mahomet's coffin that hangs betwixt heaven and earth, held up by a lodestone. The coffin that contains the corpse is of iron. Well, mates, I'm not altogether like Mahomet, but I am in part. I'm lugged up by the feet; but my head and heart are down below, and the position is neither becoming nor comfortable. Moreover, in the place where my feet now are, in the elevated region of polite society, my

feet are objected to because my boots have been greased against sea-water, and they will take no polish, and are otherwise objectionable. I'd like to draw my feet down to my head, mates—but—I can't. I thank you all.' Then he emptied his glass and sat down.

'I rise to my hind-legs once more,' said Marriage, blowing with excitement and nervousness, 'because I have a duty to perform. I meant no offence before, and I rise now to make what amends for any mistake I may have made. I'm a poor hand at speechifying. It is like running in a boat over the flats when the tide is setting outwards, and you feel beneath you the farther you go that the water is a-shallowing and a-shallowing, every pull that brings you nearer the shore. I rise, however——'

'Drat your legs, can't you leave them out!' shouted Ephraim.

'The toast, my mates, that I rise—that I rise to propose is one, I'm sure, you will all drink with the greatest cordiality and with three cheers. The toast, mates, I rises on—I mean I rises to propose, is to them dear little childer, seven in all, nestled as doves under Master Cable's spreading vine. I say, mates, though we be rough old water-dogs, that we've got tender hearts, and we respects and admires a lovely sight, such as them seven little innocents,

beginning with Mary down to the baby, all brought up as they ought to be, in the fear of God, and in order and love and peace; and I do but express the feelings of all here present when I say—God bless the darlings all.'

Then the room rang with cheers; and Richard, with the tears rising into his eyes, leaned over the table and clasped the hand of Hezekiah Marriage and shook it again and again and again; but he said not one word; he did not thank him, for his heart was full and he could not speak.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WORKING OF THE POISON.

WHEN Richard Cable left the 'Anchor' the hour was not late, but he had drunk more than his head could bear. He had always been an abstemious man; consequently, a glass or two more than what he usually allowed himself greatly upset him. On this sole occasion he had not exercised that self-restraint which was habitual with him, for on this evening the fire in his blood had urged him to slake it. But that was not all. He had felt real pleasure in being once more in congenial society—in society which exercised no thraldom over him, in which he was relieved from the suspicion that he was being watched and criticised. This sense of liberty after irksome bondage impelled him to relax, and for once to forget that there were limits he had been accustomed to set himself. He appreciated the kindliness of the men he was with, and he sought to meet them on their own ground, to show them good-fellowship.

As the fever in his veins cooled and his wrath passed away, he became cheerful, and for the first time for many days—happy. The mediæval church was wrong in ruling severe fasting during Lent, for her dutiful sons, who had wasted themselves during forty days, broke out in paroxysms of orgy at Easter. It is said that children brought up under stern discipline become dissolute when emancipated from parental governance. Cable had been for some time under discipline peculiarly galling, and now that for a moment he was free, he forgot that his liberty was not absolute.

Richard left the 'Anchor' on the arm of Jonas Flinders, his brother-in-law. He was in good humour. 'The yacht shall be rechristened to-morrow,' he said. 'She shall be called henceforth the "Bessie"—that will please my mother; she is Bessie; and the baby is called after her. The best of boats shall bear the name of the best of women and the dearest of babes.'

The air from the sea was cold; it fanned the hot face of Richard. The sky was without cloud. There was no moon, and many stars were visible; not that the sky was crowded with them, as on a winter night, because there was twilight in the heavens; nevertheless, many showed. The evening star twinkled. Sirius

turned red and green and gold, flashed and winked like a diamond. The night was so cool, the breath from the sea so fresh, that Richard's hot head seemed to him to steam. 'There is the Big Bear,' said he, leaning heavily on the arm of Jonas, and pointing to the constellation known to every child. 'There he is turning about on the end of his tail. He's got his nose high up now—he'll have to bring it down before morning. Often have I watched him go round like the sails of a windmill, when I've kept watch on board the lightship.—Jonas! I think I'm turning about myself, like the Great Bear; but my head is the point on which I revolve. It's a wonderful consideration to me, Jonas, that the Great Bear always knows what to do with his front-paws. They are the pointers. Draw a line through them wherever they may be, and it touches the north star. And when you consider that the Bear is never still, always turning about on the tip of his tail, I say it is marvellous! There is instinct for you. I couldn't do it. My paws are never in place. If I stick them into my pockets, I am wrong. If I put them down straight and stiff, one on either side of me, I'm wrong again. If I plant them on my knees, it is worse than ever. If I draw the back of one of them across my nose, it is as bad as murder. Then, Jonas,

whatever shall I say about my hind-feet, as Hezekiah Marriage calls them? I can't keep them anywhere where they do not give offence. I've curled them in a sort of knot under my chair where I have been sitting, and I was told I looked absurd—ill at ease. I've stretched them out straight before me and I was informed I was uncouth. I've put one on one side of my chair, and the other on the other side, and that was not right neither; and then the boots have been so smeared with rancid tallow, to keep out the water, that they won't do neither. I'm well aware, Jonas, in the sphere to which I'm elewated, that I'm looked on much as a great ungainly Bear; but I wish in that same firmament I knew how to dispose of my extremities. Oh, the agony of mind those extremities of mine have caused me! Why is it, Jonas, that no beast or bird or creeping thing has any thought about or difficulty with his extremities, but only man?—and we're made to believe he is the lord of creation.—I tell you what I think, Jonas—you're not laughing at me. It is in polite society only we get laughed at and sneered at. It is not my feet, but *her* eyes that are the pointers; they are for ever pointing out my extremities, turn them about and put them where I may. Take her bright brown eyes

and draw a line through them——' He checked himself, and said hastily: 'I'm not speaking of my wife; I'm not going to have her alluded to in this company, nor her name named, because your mouths have not been fashioned to pronounce it right, nor can your heads understand her ways of going on, and I won't have any commenting on and criticising of what you do not understand. We'll turn the conversation to the "Bessie."'

The cold night-air was affecting him. He who was usually so little of a talker had become loquacious; but then for many days he had been afraid to speak lest he should commit a solecism, and now that the fear was removed, he talked a great deal.

'There is the light out yonder—or two, is it?—where I used to be in the boat. They have put another wessel there now, and another man is in it. Lord! Jonas, I almost wish I were back at the old work, cleaning of the lamp, instead of always being a-snuffing and cleaning and polishing of myself—and never able to get myself right, always smudges somewhere, and rust-marks, and smoke and smut. Out yonder, one day passed much like another, and all peaceable. True enough, we had storms, and I was tossed about; but there never was any storm and tossing about inside of me; and

now it is all inward, and none without. I'd rather the billows ran mountains high and the breakers foamed over my head, than have the seas so heavy within.—What creatures we are, Jonas! When I was on the boat, I was always longing to be ashore with my little ones; and when I was ashore—somehow, I wasn't altogether sorry when my time came to return to the ship. So, I guess, when a man's a bachelor, he longs to be married; and when he's married, he looks back on his singleness with great longing. We always wally what we haven't got. Man is a perwerse animal, Jonas.'

'Polly was a good wife. You think of her at times still—though she wasn't rich and accomplished.'

'Polly!'—Richard tried to recover himself; he was lurching against his brother-in-law. 'Polly was an excellent wife.—But, Jonas, I will have no comparisons drawn. If you mean to insinuate anything against my present wife, you make me your enemy for life. Polly was everything that was right and good in her way; and I have no doubt that—that *she*—her name is more than we can pronounce right, we uneducated folk—*she*—— What was I saying? She also is all that is excellent in her way. We do not compare them; they are different. —Let us turn the conversation. The Great

Bear stands in the sky, always a-turning on the end of his tail, which is a moral lesson to us always to keep the conversation a-turning.'

The two had nearly reached the cottage. Richard's talk became more disjointed, his walk less steady. The cold air ensuing on the heated atmosphere of the tavern parlour exercised its usual effect. He had left the 'Anchor' exhilarated; he was now intoxicated.

Was this the same Richard Cable who was wont to return home with raised head and even step, and whistling, to let his little ones know that their father was coming to them to kiss them ere they closed their eyes in sleep? Was this the same Richard Cable now reeling along the road maundering nonsense? What had occasioned this change? Only a drop of poison infused into his blood. The boys in Æsop's fable threw stones at the frogs, whereon one of the tribe raised his head out of the water and said: 'What is fun to you is death to us;' and so may many a man croak in his pain, when merry creatures pelt him with hard words: 'What is fun to them demoralises me.' Richard was already demoralised. His self-respect had met with a mortal wound. This self-respect was the stay which had held up all his other virtues. Strong in his manly dignity, he had been gentle, patient, self-controlled,

modest, and temperate. Josephine had struck at his sense of moral dignity, and when that gave way, every grace that had leaned on it went into the dust at the same time.

A Spanish bull-fight is by no means the even conflict of equally opposed antagonists that we supposed in childhood. The bulls have no inclination to fight; their disposition is peaceable. It is only after persistent and prolonged efforts that the matadores can goad them into pugnacity. They endure without resistance the stab of knife and the prog of lance. They turn their heads away, so as not to see the fluttered scarlet cloaks. And we men are much the same—placable, indisposed to gore, ready to rub our noses against the hands of our gaily tricked-out tormentors, against hands wet with our blood. We thrust our stupid heads against their breasts, asking to be patted on our flanks or rubbed between the horns. We do not want to fight, not we! We would not tear away a ribbon or a lace, or trample on a bugle off the frippery that adorns our tormentors. We have been stabbed, but we submit to wounds, and when next goaded, limit our protest to a subdued bellow. Possibly, we shake our heads in threat, but we mean no harm. When at length, with cruel ingenuity, our pretty persecutors drive barbs into the

open wounds, and these barbs are armed with crackers and squibs and Catherine-wheels; and when they dribble Greek-fire and flaming sulphur into our sores, then, in our agony, we toss our heads and paw the ground, and strike the barriers of plank with our horns, ripping them like rushes, and we race, bellowing, blinded, mad, round the arena—then woe to those who stand in our way; we are no longer responsible for our actions.

Bessie Cable was sitting in the cottage by the table, in the front kitchen. She had been cutting out a dress for baby, a little pink dress with white sprigs on it, a very small pattern; and Mary sat on a stool beside her, hemming the pieces together. The cut-out scraps lay on the table, some ready for Mrs. Cable to sew together. Near her feet was the cradle, in which baby lay asleep.

'O grannie!' said Mary, 'will she not look sweet in this pink dress? And she will have a red sash and red bows on her little shoulders. She will be a sweet little rosebud, will she not?' Then Mary stooped over the sleeping child. 'Do, grannie! look at her,' she said. 'Was there ever such a darling! What a pretty little dimple she has! She is laughing in her sleep. I do believe she is dreaming about her new frock.—Do you think, grandmamma, that

babies know what is going to happen? I suppose the angels do, because they are so near God, who knows everything that is to be. I daresay little baby-souls that have just come down from God can see a little way into what is going to happen, and that is why Bessie is laughing now—she sees the pink frock in which she will be so smart on Sunday.'

'I do not suppose babies see into the future, dear Mary, not even little pink frocks with carnation bows. I do not think it would be well for them. They would see many sorrows and pains; and then, instead of smiling in their sleep, their tears would trickle over their cheeks. They are happy because they are blind to what is to be.'

'Grannie,' pursued Mary, 'how do babies' souls come to them? Father took me outside one night and let me see the falling stars, and he said they were baby-souls coming down out of heaven from the hand of God. Why do the falling stars always go out when they come near the earth?'

'Because, I suppose, they enter into the little bodies.'

'But—grannie,' Mary went on—she was a thoughtful child, and asked more questions than Bessie Cable had the wit to answer—'how is it that there are no rising stars? They

are all falling, and none flying up. It ought not to be so. If we see the little bright souls come down when babies are born, then, when good people die, we should see their souls like bright stars mount up to heaven.—Have you seen them do that?'

'No, dear, never.'

'But why not, grannie?'

'Because the souls get so dust-clogged and darkened and stained with their sojourn on earth, that the brightness is dimmed, and God must clean them again before they shine.'

Mary considered a while, and then said: 'I don't think father's soul will need much cleaning, it shines so bright now.'

'Hark!' said Mrs. Cable. 'There is his tread.—No; it is not his tread.'

A hand on the door; it was thrown open, and Richard Cable staggered in, without his coat, which he had forgotten, and left on the cupboard in the 'Anchor' parlour. His face was red, his hair disordered, his eyes wandering.

Mary looked up, sprang to her feet with a cry of delight, and with open arms prepared to run to him. His mother laid her work on her lap, and looked at him with doubt and alarm. Mary was arrested by something in his appearance so unusual as to frighten her.

'Richard!' said Mrs. Cable, 'what has happened?'

'She shall be christened to-morrow,' he replied; 're-christened to-morrow—and called henceforth the "Bessie."'

His mother knew what had occurred. The tone of his voice, the drawl in his speech, his position lurching from one foot to the other, declared it.

'Father dear,' said little Mary, 'how strange you look!'

'Mary,' said Mrs. Cable hastily, 'go away. Run upstairs at once.'

'Stay a bit,' ordered Richard. 'Say your prayers first. Repeat your Scripture lesson, "O generation of wipers," but be very scrupulous about the *We*. Polite society lays great weight on it. I won't have it laugh at my Mary because she can't say the *We* right. I can't do it myself——'

'Go upstairs immediately,' said Mrs. Cable, rising and catching Mary by the hand. 'Your father is—is unwell. You must go instantly to your room. Say your prayers by yourself, and pray for him.' She hurried the child to the stairs.

Mary went reluctantly; but she was a docile child, and did not venture to disobey. On the stairs she stood and blew a kiss to her

father from her little palm. 'Grannie,' she said, 'he is not very unwell, is he? He will be well to-morrow.—Dear father, try to be quite well soon.'

'Halloo!' said Richard, staggering to the table, 'what have we here? A new frock for little Bessie! Ha, ha! Shall we have the yacht new christened to-morrow? No disrespect meant to my wife. No slur cast. But we can't pronounce the name right, so had better not pronounce it at all.' Then he went to the cradle. 'Bessie!' he said, 'come along and crow over giving your name to the yacht. A fine boat that answers her helm, as a racer does a touch on the bridle.' He stooped, put his hands into the cradle under the child, and raised it out of its crib. '"There's grog in the captain's cabin,"' he said, swinging the sleeping child aloft, '"there's water down below."—Halloo! at sea already—life on the ocean wave and on the rolling deep! Up we go! Down we go!' He lurched over.

'For heaven's sake, Richard,' cried his mother from the staircase, where she stood holding Mary's hand—'Richard, let the baby alone! Put her back in the cradle.'

'Don't you fear! The "Bessie" shall rake the stars with her topmast, and dance in the foam of the ocean. Shan't she, my baby?

Up she swings with straining timbers, down she goes!' He lost his balance, fell over the cradle; and the child dropped from his hands on the stone floor, before Mrs. Cable had time to unlock her hand from Mary's clutch and fly to catch the babe from his uncertain hold. The little creature uttered a cry and was still. But oh!—with a shriek, piercing, tearing through the house, frightening the children in their beds, the father picked himself up on his knees and clasped his hands, one on each side of his head, sobered in one moment of supreme agony and remorse. He knelt as one turned to stone, with his eyes riveted to the white motionless child, lying on the pavement, his face turned to the hue of death. Was the little one killed? Was it severely injured?

'Run, run for the doctor!' again ordered Mrs. Cable.

Then Richard staggered to his feet like one suddenly roused from sleep, and yet under the influence of a dream. Still in his shirt-sleeves, and without thought to put on his hat, he went to the door, and ran. He stayed at the doctor's door, but he did not wait for him and return with him to the cottage. He ran on, ran for an hour without stopping in one direction—towards Brentwood Hall.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CUTTING THE CABLE.

JOSEPHINE'S spirits went up like a cork in water when she left Hanford. She liked Lady Brentwood. She was fond of society, and the society met at Brentwood Hall was usually agreeable. Lady Brentwood was an admirable hostess; the baronet, a cheery, kind man, who rather petted and flattered Josephine. But these were not the prime causes of her exhilaration. She was rejoiced for a few hours to be free of Richard, who was to her a constant cause of anxiety and annoyance. She, in her way, was feeling the same reaction that swept over Richard when he came among his friends at the 'Anchor.' She asked herself now why she had married him, and was not able at once to find the true answer. She had, in fact, taken him for several reasons. She never had really loved him; but she had been grateful to him, and she had been attracted by his simplicity, integrity, and manliness—by the

contrast he presented to her father. But perversity had had its part in bringing her to marry Richard. She knew that by so doing she would anger her father and offend her aunt; and having lost all respect for both, she went headlong in a course which, because disapproved by them, she argued must be right. Without any fixed standards of right, she was swayed by her impulses, often good, but sometimes exaggerated, till all the goodness was lost. She had felt her need of a guide; but Richard was useless to her; he was a drag, an encumbrance, a cause of perplexity. Now, she recognised the justice of her father's opposition, and regretted that she had not received it with respect. In her self-condemnation she was drawn towards her father as she had never been drawn before. She had revolted against his contemptuous disregard for truth and cynical disparagement of sincerity. Now she began to see that he was not wholly in the wrong. Truth, sincerity, are raw and rude virtues, not to be taken up in their natural state in the lump, but to be minced, and spiced, and rolled into forced-meat balls, or tucked into pâtés, and garnished and glossed over, and served round as a hors-d'œuvre. Life is not to be sustained thereon; they are to be picked at and taken in small portions at the end of a fork.

Naked truth is a savage virtue fit only for naked savages, suitable to an age when men ate acorns and beechmast. Civilisation from its first initiation was a covering up and disguising of truth. No cultured man speaks the bare truth to his neighbour, but rubs off its edges and smooths and polishes it. The bare truth blinds like the sun, and must be looked at through smoked glass. The perfectly true man is insufferable to every man he comes in contact with. Aristotle may have called the perfect man *tetragonos*, four-square, but such a man is full of angles, which impinge on and bruise his neighbours. Everything in life is full of disguise; truth is enveloped in as many coverings as a Chinese ivory carved puzzle-ball—the charm lies in the sculpture of the coats, not in the pip within. Our clothing, from the first apron of leaves, is disguise; our speech is the veil we throw over our thoughts; the courtesies of life are the figments which interpose between us and our fellows, to prevent our coming to blows. These thoughts passed through Josephine's brain; and she began to admit that her father was not so much in fault as she had supposed, and that she was premature in condemning him. She gravitated towards him, now that she was in this humour; and his quick observation showed him that he had acquired

an ascendency over her he had not previously possessed.

When they were at Brentwood Hall, some time elapsed before dinner, whilst their hostess was engaged. Then Josephine took her father's arm, and they wandered together into the conservatory. He saw that she desired to speak with him on what was uppermost in her breast, yet was shy of opening the subject. 'Do you care for begonias, papa?' she asked. 'I think they are not attractive plants. They have nothing but their colour in their favour.—Oh, do look at the maiden-hair fern. How prettily it is grown in cork along the walls; and see! it springs up luxuriantly in every cranny between the joints of the pavement. It will not flourish thus with us.'

'It wants warmth, and hates a draught. To every plant a proper climate is needed that it may thrive. Bring the coarse bracken in here, and it will spindle; put a maiden-hair out of doors, and it will languish.'

'What a pity it is, papa, that there is no managing a fernery at our place. The pipes heat the vines and flowers; and if another house were added on, there would not be heat enough to warm it. It is a pity Cousin Gabriel contrived his greenhouses so badly that there is

no enlarging them without complete reconstruction.'

'My dear, we should build our houses and shape our futures without corners for pities to lodge.'

'What do you mean, papa?'

'I mean, that we should well consider what we are about to do; and then, when we have acted, we shall not be exclaiming: "What a pity! what a pity! I did not see this before." In all our plans, we should contrive to let the pities be outside, like the vents for sewage gas.'

Josephine knew that her father was thinking of her and what she had done. 'We cannot always help ourselves; the pities will come.'

'They *may* come, where forethought has been exercised; where it has not, they *will* come.'

'And when they are there?'

'We must get rid of them if we can.'

'That is easier said than done,' observed Josephine.

To which her father remarked in answer: 'Where there is a will there is a way.'

They walked on together for some little way without speaking; but presently, Mr. Cornellis said with a tone of voice that conveyed a sneer: 'Among the many pities that occur, there is one strikes me with peculiar force at

this moment—that the Wadi el Arabah is dry.'

'Why so?'

'Because, if there were water-communication between the Gulf of Akbar and the Dead Sea, that intelligent and adventuresome sailor, your good husband, might be sent in the yacht to Jericho.'

'Papa!' Josephine sighed.

'As there is not,' pursued Mr. Cornellis, might he not be induced to attempt the North-west Passage? There would be, to be sure, the chance of his getting crystallised in an iceberg —like a mastodon.'

Josephine shrank from her father; she unlocked her arm from his; his tone offended her.

'One thing is certain,' said he. 'Richard is reduced to abject misery; he is weary of life among us. I give him his due. He knows he is out of his element. He wants but a touch to convert his rotary orbit about you into a parabola, with a perihelion at remote intervals.'

He waited a few minutes for her to speak, but she said nothing, her face was troubled.

'It is said,' continued Mr. Cornellis, 'that if you give a man rope enough he will hang himself. You, my dear'—he looked at her out of the corners of his eyes—'you have been given plenty of Cable, and are beginning to

throttle—in self-defence you must *cut your Cable.*'

This was all that passed between them, but it sufficed. Her father had shown Josephine the only way out of her present difficulties. The alienation must be made complete; she and her husband must separate without scandal, with mutual consent. Each was in a wrong position, and felt uncomfortable. But would Richard as readily agree to this arrangement as herself? He loved her, and she did not love him. He had his nice notions of duty, which might keep him dangling about her. But there was a greater impediment than this—his children. Would he be induced to leave them? Would he be persuaded to depart with them? How could she even suggest to him that he should do this? For the first time she felt an impatience of the children boil up in her. 'Little cumbersome pests!' she said, as she put on her bracelets, but she did not allude to the bracelets.

She was beautifully dressed at dinner—a creamy white silk with orange flowers and lace; round her neck was a chain of pearls. She looked strikingly beautiful. Her clear olive cheek was flushed with excitement, and her large brown eyes were full of light. By day the white would not have suited her complexion;

but it was otherwise at night. She was taken into dinner by the baronet, and she exerted herself to be agreeable. Sir John was a very old friend, whom she had known since she was a child, one who had humoured and encouraged her, and laughed at her sharp speeches. Not a word did he say about Richard. He expressed no regret that he was not present. He asked her about her voyage, about Heligoland and Bremerhaven, and Hamburg and the Danish Isles, which she had visited on her wedding tour. He had a yacht of his own, and at one time had gone about in it a good deal; but of late years he had felt his age and given up the boat to his son. As we get old, we do not lose our love of the amusements of our youth; but we feel the labour that attends them, and the effort we make in taking our pleasure neutralises the pleasure itself.

On the other side of Josephine sat Captain Sellwood, who had taken into dinner a heavy young lady. The captain made a few cumbrous attempts at conversation, which fell dead, and were followed by periods of silence.

'I hear the discharge of minute-guns,' said Josephine in a low tone to him. 'You and your convoy make no way. I am a fast clipper, and have come to the rescue.'

She was in good spirits. She was sorry for

the captain, whom she had affronted when he proposed to her, and she was eager now to make all the amends in her power. Accordingly, when not engaged with Sir John, she threw herself with energy into the difficult task of waking up and maintaining a conversation with Captain Sellwood and his partner. She was only partially successful. She was like a boy trying to fly a kite when there is little wind. When he runs and lugs at the string, up goes the kite; when he desists, it heads downward and lies inert upon the grass. As the captain was at her side, Josephine was not subjected to the gaze of his solemn ox-like eyes. This was a relief to her; she could not have endured the scrutiny. With some, when they look at you, you can see in their eyes what ideas they have formed, favourable or otherwise, concerning you. There is a certain amount of satisfaction in that; but with Captain Sellwood it was not possible to do so; there was no reading anything in them.

Josephine was playing an unreal part. At the bottom of her heart lay a leaden burden of care and mortification, but she gave no token of it in her conduct. Her face was full of smiles, her eyes of humour.

'When are you going back to India?' she asked of the captain.

He did not know exactly—he had a long leave of absence, on account of ill health.

'General torpidity?' asked Josephine.

'A torpid liver—yes. Perhaps I may have to leave the army.'

Then she turned to Sir John Brentwood, and noticed Lady Brentwood bowing; so she rose, and the ladies followed her into the drawing-room. As she passed her father, she caught his eye; it said plainly: 'You are queen here now only because Richard is absent.'

The drawing-room of Brentwood Hall was a long room, occupying the entire garden front of the mansion. It was lit with tall Queen Anne windows, now covered with pea-green curtains embroidered with yellow and brown heart's-eases. The room was panelled and painted creamy white, the mouldings picked out with gold. All the furniture was in white and gold and pea-green. The ceiling was remarkably rich with wreaths of plaster-work flowers and fruits in the style of Grinling Gibbons. Between the windows were full-length family portraits, some of great beauty—giving colour and depth of tone to a room otherwise pale in its decorations. There was one famous painting there, by Gainsborough, of a Lady seated by the seashore under a tree, listening to the murmur of the waves in a shell

that she held to her ear. She was in white satin, with a black lace scarf thrown lightly over her head. Blue bows adorned her dress. Gulls flitted over the deep-blue sea in the background. The expression of the sweet face was one of melancholy ; and a look of yearning for something far away was cleverly depicted in the eyes. That something far away was her husband, Sir Beaulieu Brentwood, who hung between another pair of windows—a gorgeous figure in crimson satin. He went by the name of Red Ruin in the family, because of the disasters he had brought on it. The picture had been painted in Italy. The dress was fantastic, worn at a masquerade, borrowed or hired from the *garde-robe* of some theatre—red stockings, slashed trunk-hose and jacket, a hat with a crimson feather.

'You are looking at Red Ruin,' said Lady Brentwood. 'Fortunately for the family, he fell abroad in a duel. He had eloped with a Roman princess, and was run through the body by the husband. If he had lived a year or two longer, the Brentwoods would now be nowhere, the estate sold, the family irretrievably impoverished.'

Josephine studied the Gainsborough.

'His poor wife,' said Lady Brentwood, 'looks like Patience on a monument, smiling

at grief. He deserted her, treated her shamefully, hardly allowed her enough to live upon; and yet she forgave everything, and was, I believe, the only person who wept true tears at his death. I do not think I should sigh, and look so longingly for his return, had Sir John played me these tricks. I am cast in another mould. Some folks would be glad enough to be rid of their husbands. You, my dear, have not been married long enough to know what a relief it is to be quit of them for a while. Bless me! what is all that noise in the hall? What a clatter the servants are making.' Just then a footman entered. 'Thompson,' she said, 'what is the meaning of this? Are you all gone mad?'

'Please, my lady, might I speak to your ladyship a moment outside?'

'What is it? I insist on knowing. What has happened? Speak out, Thompson.'

'My lady, there's—a man, a fellow got into the house in his shirt-sleeves and without his hat.'

'Well, turn him out. Is he drunk?'

'We can't make out, my lady, exactly. The butler has had a deal of work getting him into the housekeeper's room.'

'How vexing; send for the gamekeepers, and have him expelled. Is he insane?'

'We don't know what to make of him, my lady. He says he's come after his wife.'

'Wife—wife! She's not here. He must be drunk.'

'He's very hot and excited, my lady; he says as his name is Cable.'

Lady Brentwood started.

Josephine's blood rushed in a wave to her heart, and then poured through all her veins, like the bore in the Severn. For a moment the room spun round and she saw nothing distinctly; but she speedily recovered herself, and with crimson brow and eyes that flamed with anger, she said: 'Let me go, dear Lady Brentwood. I will see him.' Then she left the room, with firm foot but bounding heart, and pulses in her temples that smote like hammers. 'Lead the way, Thompson!' she said haughtily. 'The man desires, possibly, to speak with me.'

The footman conducted her along a passage and down steps to the parlour of the housekeeper, a room that smelt of preserves. She was followed by her hostess, ready to retire if need be, but desirous to be at hand to prevent scandal.

In the housekeeper's room was Richard Cable in an arm-chair, the butler and the housekeeper by him endeavouring to compose him. He was in a condition of great agitation.

His face hot, his hair wet, he was panting for breath; his sleeves were unbuttoned at the wrist, his tie twisted to one side of his neck. His collar was limp and crumpled.

'If you will kindly leave me alone with him,' said Josephine, controlling herself, and turning to the housekeeper and butler, 'I will send him away.' Turning round, she saw Lady Brentwood in the doorway. 'Dear Lady Brentwood,' she said, going a step towards her. 'I am ashamed and grieved that you should have been disturbed. Let me manage this matter. I will dismiss him very speedily.'

Her hostess at once withdrew and the servants disappeared. When she was left alone in the room with Richard, she stood opposite him, looking at him with angry brow and eyes that darted flashes of fire. Her teeth, her lips, her hands were clenched. Her eyebrows were contracted, so that they met above her nose. His breast was heaving; drops of sweat stood on his brow and rolled down his face like raindrops.

'Well,' she said at length, 'are you going to speak and inform me as to the reason of this new outrage? Are you bent on driving me to curse the day that I ever took your hand to raise you out of the gutter?'

He did not answer; he could not; his

breath was spent; the blood boiled and sang in his ears. Perhaps he did not hear her.

Why had he come? He did not ask himself this question. It did not occur to him to ask it. He had come, impelled by a natural instinct, not by any articulate reason. She was his wife, the one who stood nearest to him in the whole world. He had committed a crime; he was conscious of an agony of remorse and terror which filled him. To whom should he fly in such an hour of supreme pain but to his wife, to pour into her ear the story of his trouble, to ask her sympathy, her assistance?

He had not stopped to consider; had he done so, he might have hesitated; he might have doubted whether she was a person ready to meet him with open arms and comfort him in his sorrow. But he did not stay to think; he ran straight forward, thrust on by remorse. His mind was dazed with despair, incapable of thinking, and so he acted upon natural, unreasoning instinct. To whom other than a wife should he turn—the refuge of a tortured soul, the proper sharer in every sorrow, the only one who with a ray of love could enlighten the darkness which enveloped his brain and heart? Now his wife stood before him, with bare bust and arms, in white silk and lace and flowers, wearing pearls about her neck

and sparkling bracelets on her arms, with long white gloves, neatly buttoned, and a fan in one hand.

Richard Cable looked at her; and now, for the first time since he had started on his run, did the thought emerge out of the confusion and pain in him, that this beautiful, dazzling, stately creature was not one to solace, advise, and help him.

'What is it?' she asked in a hard tone; and as she spoke there sprung up in her mind the recollection of her father's words, 'Cut your Cable,' and she saw that the desired opportunity had arrived.

She waited a moment, and then said again: 'I have asked you twice, what is the meaning of this insult?' Then with concentrated bitterness: 'Are you too drunk to speak?'

He raised his hands and clasped his head: 'I have killed—or hurt——'

'Whom?'

'Little Bessie! I let her fall—on the stone floor—little Bessie!' Then he broke down, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed.

She stood unmoved before him. She waited a moment for him to recover himself, then in the same hard tone she asked: 'What have you come here for?'

'For you.'

'For me? Why? Bessie is no child of mine. Go back!'

'Will you not come with me?'

'I—I go with you!' She laughed contemptuously. 'Ici je m'amuse parfaitement bien. You do not understand French. It does not matter—you can gather the sense.' She turned her back on him and left the room.

CHAPTER XXX.

NOT TO BE RESPLICED.

On the modern stage, when persons have to disappear or properties to be removed without interruption of scenes, a steam or smoke is raised, or veils of imperceptible gauze are let down, behind which the requisite operations can be performed unobserved by the spectators. Similar appliances have been in use on the social stage for many generations to disguise what we do not wish to be seen. It was so on this occasion. The movement of social entertainment went on uninterrupted; the gentlemen came from their wine; the tea was handed round; ladies sang and performed on the piano; Lady Brentwood had agreeable things to say to all her guests; the smoke of small-talk and the veil of etiquette screened the unpleasant episode which had just been enacted, and which had created some disturbance.

The hostess herself knew no particulars, and she was careful to ask no questions.

When Josephine reappeared, she covered her embarrassment cleverly by thanking her for having fetched her music, and insisting on her taking her place at the piano and giving the company one of her charming songs. Josephine went to her portfolio and took out the first piece that met her hand without particularly noticing what it was. She knew perfectly all the pieces she had put together, and there needed no choosing where music is used not as a delectation, but as a cover to the voices of talkers. When she took her place on the stool and unfolded the paper, she found that she had selected the Mermaid's song from *Oberon*. She struck the first chords listlessly, and then regretted that she had taken this piece, for with the air came over her the recollection of the lightship and of Dicky Cable's whistle. 'I will never, never sing it again,' she thought as she closed it. 'That is the last of the Mermaid.'

Next day, Lady Brentwood persuaded Josephine and her father to prolong their visit over another night. There was a garden-party that afternoon, and another dinner in the evening, when a very musical acquaintance, a man who wrote critiques in some of the papers, a man steeped in Wagner to the chin, was coming; and Josephine, said her host, would be sure to like to meet him and discuss Wagner with

him and the merits of her favourite Weber. Josephine was a heretic; she despised Mendelssohn, thought him a great prophet of musical commonplace, and had shocked Lady Brentwood. 'My dear,' she said, 'we will refer the matter to Mr. Wayland Smith; you must stop for dinner, and hear what he has to say about Mendelssohn. I daresay you may be right about these Songs without Words, but none but a master could have written the Scotch Symphony.'

So Josephine and her father remained; and at table her hostess managed to set Mr. Wayland Smith next to the bride, though he did not take her in to dinner. Josephine was passionately fond of music, but she had not had extended opportunities of hearing much. Her father took her to town occasionally to concerts and the opera; but, after all, the circle of operas performed in town is a small one—*Trovatore*, *Roberto*, the *Prophète*, *Rigoletto*—now and then *Lohengrin*, *Trovatore* again, *toujours Trovatore*. Mr. Wayland Smith had gone through a German course, hated Italian music, and had much to say about composers of whom the English musical world knew nothing, and whom, therefore, it despised—Marschner, Lorzing, Nicolai, &c.

Josephine spent a very enjoyable evening.

She sang for Mr. Wayland Smith, and very goodhumouredly and frankly accepted his criticisms. He looked over her portfolio, and with a blue pencil scored some of her pieces. 'When you get home,' he said, 'tear these to fragments and strew them to the winds; it is worse than waste of time to play rubbish.'

Josephine quite forgot about Richard Cable and his injured child in the interest she felt in the conversation of the musical critic. She made him write down a list of pieces for her to get and learn.

'I knew,' said Lady Brentwood, 'that you would enjoy yourself when I persuaded you to stay.'

'Dear Lady Brentwood, I have not spent such a pleasant evening for a long time. I forgot all my worries.'

'You have worries?'

'Like every one else. But—I am glad now to learn that I am not alone in my heresy. Mr. Wayland Smith shrugged his shoulders over Mendelssohn, and said the Songs without Words were fit only for school-girls.'

Josephine had banished her worries from her thoughts while at Brentwood Hall; but when she returned to Hanford they returned with renewed force to disturb her peace. Her conscience, which had slept whilst away from

home, now uncoiled and stretched itself. She felt qualms at the recollection of her treatment of Richard.

Her father had asked no questions about what had happened; he seemed to have divined all. As she descended from the carriage, and he gave her his hand, he said: 'Take care —no resplicing of cut Cables.' In no other way did he allude to what had occurred.

Richard was not at the house when they arrived. He did not come out into the porch to meet her. She hardly expected to see him, yet she felt disappointed that he was not there.

'Is Mr. Cable about the garden?' she asked of the butler.

'No, ma'am; he's not been here for some time.—There's been an accident, ma'am.'

'Is the child much hurt?' she inquired with a slight tremor in her voice.

'I do not know, ma'am, for certain. Shall I send the boy down to inquire how the young lady is?'

Young lady! Tiny Bessie a young lady! What condescension of John Thomas to call the poor little child, the sailor's babe, a young lady!

'Never mind,' she answered. 'I daresay I shall step down myself and ask. The case is not serious?'

The butler bowed, put his hand to his mouth to cover a cough, and said in an apologetic tone: 'Certainly not, ma'am—only the spine is injured, and the child will be a cripple for life.'

Josephine shuddered and turned white. Then she went uptairs; her hands shook as she removed her bonnet. What should she do? Ought she not to go at once to the cottage? She and her father had lunched at Brentwood, and did not return till the afternoon. As she sat and thought what line of conduct she should pursue, the first bell rang for dinner. She dressed hastily. It was too late for her to go then. Perhaps she would run down after dinner.

Josephine could not eat anything at dinner; she picked the food in her plate, and sent it away. She could not talk; she had lost her interest in Wagner, and her prejudice against Mendelssohn. Her aunt asked whom she had met at Brentwood, and how she had amused herself; and her father watched her; she changed colour during dinner several times, and complained of the heat, though the evening was cold. She was thinking of Bessie, the poor little blue-eyed, fair-haired child, that had put its little fingers to her mouth, and whose palm she had kissed. This little creature crippled

for life—a whole future darkened! How had the accident happened? Richard was so careful, how came he to let the child fall? Josephine knew how his heart was wrapped about his little ones, how especially dear to him was that innocent babe, and she knew that he must be suffering acutely. He had been suffering whilst she had been enjoying herself. Whilst she had been discussing Mendelssohn with Mr. Wayland Smith, he had been eagerly questioning the surgeon as to the life of the sufferer. Richard would never forgive her for her want of sympathy. She had cut her Cable indeed—through and through, with sharp knife and remorseless hand.

She could not remain with her aunt in the drawing-room after dinner; she went into the hall and threw a shawl over her head and wrapped it round her neck. Now she was cold, shivering. A moment ago she was hardly able to breathe, and was fanning herself because of the heat.

Her father came out of the dining-room. 'Whither are you wandering, my pretty maid?' he asked. 'After poppies and nightingales?'

'Papa,' she said, 'I must go. It is wicked not to make inquiries. I cannot send; I must go myself. Richard will never forgive me.'

'Well,' said he coldly, 'it is best as it is.

Good words will not mend broken bones. You have missed the chance, if you sought reconciliation. It is too late now. I will go to the cottage and make inquiries. Let matters take their course. Penelope unstitched at night what she had sewn in the day. Do not you try to sew up what you have unravelled.' He took her shawl off her shoulders. She submitted, and went back into the parlour to her aunt. He was right; it was too late.

Josephine retired early to bed; she was too uneasy to talk or settle to anything. When in bed, she could not sleep. Her mind became restlessly active; every trouble doubled itself in bulk. Wrongs done her grew in grievousness, her own faults darkened in colour. When she thought of the annoyance Richard had caused her by his ill-considered action in coming to Brentwood, her veins glowed, her head throbbed, and her eyes burnt in their sockets. She could not forgive this—this humiliation, to which he had subjected her before her hostess and the servants of the house. If he took offence at her conduct, it was unreasonable of him; the aggravation had been excessive. If he refused to be reconciled, it was well that it should be so; she could be happy without him; it was abundantly proved that she could not be happy

with him. Next moment, she thought of Richard running to seek her, to pour out his grief into her bosom. She saw him, under the starlit sky, in his shirt-sleeves, running with the sweat streaming from his face, and his breath issuing in snorts through his nostrils. Why had he come for her, instead of going straight home to his child? He had run to her in perfect reliance on her goodness of heart and ready sympathy. She was ashamed of herself; she had wounded his heart where it was most susceptible. She resolved, in spite of her father's advice, to go to the cottage next morning, acknowledge her fault, and make her peace with Richard. Then she saw rise up before her in the darkness of her room the white form of Gainsborough's Lady Brentwood, with the shell to her ear, listening to the roar of the sea, with a far-off, wistful, longing look in her eyes. Would she—Josephine—ever feel such a longing for her husband as Lady Brentwood had for Red Ruin? No—that was not possible. A woman might lose her heart to a rake in satin and velvet, might forgive infidelities; but she could not love a common sailor, and pardon a lapse in grammar. Red Ruin had deserted his wife, but he did not put his knife in his mouth; he had eloped with a princess, but he had held fast to the letters *h* and *v*.

Therefore, it was quite permissible and possible that Lady Brentwood should feel tenderness for Sir Beaulieu; but she, Josephine, could never experience such a yearning of the soul for her husband, were he to be absent and become indifferent. The clock struck four before she fell asleep.

When she woke, she had come round to her father's opinion—that the breach having once been made, it must not be filled in. She regretted that she had appeared unfeeling in the matter of little Bessie; but we cannot pick our occasions, and if Richard came to interrupt her with unwelcome news when she was engaged—she very naturally lost her temper and spoke unsympathetically. A rupture with Richard was inevitable; the occasion had come; it was not quite such as she would have chosen, but having come, she must take advantage of it. It would pave the way to a separation, and Richard might be induced to leave Hanford. If he would not go, she was resolved to depart herself; they could not live together in the same place in different houses and moving in different social spheres.

In this mood she abode the whole forenoon; but after lunch, she sat in the garden by herself. Aunt Judith had gone upstairs to take a nap; her father was away with the

agent who had called. Then a reaction set in, and she felt that she had been heartless. Her better self prevailed. Her pride stood in the way for some while, but went down at last. She tried to stay it up with the thought that Richard could not care much for her, or he would have returned to the Hall; but her efforts availed nothing.

She rose from the garden-seat, went through the gate, and walked to the cottage, without saying a word to any one.

The elder children were at school, to be out of the way. Mrs. Cable had gone to the surgery for medicine; and when Josephine entered the house, Richard was there alone in the kitchen, watching and soothing the baby.

He looked up as she entered. He was on one knee by the cradle; the afternoon sun streamed in at the little window on his face and dazzled him, so that at first he was unable to distinguish his visitor. Josephine noticed a change in him. His cheeks seemed to have fallen in; his eyes were hollow, and his hair had lost its spring and curl. The temples stood out, but the flesh had sunk into pits beneath them. He looked ten years older. But she saw that there was change of another sort in his face as well. The expression was altered. The light, the trust had vanished

from it; its frank kindliness had disappeared. Across the brows lay deep furrows, and the mouth was contracted. The man was not so much oldened as embittered.

'Richard!' said Josephine, 'I have come to know the truth about dear little Bessie.'

He started at her voice; the furrows on his brow became deeper, and his teeth clenched, giving his jaw a heavy look it never had worn before. He put up his hand to shade his eyes from the sun, and he looked steadily at her for a minute without answering. In the shadow of his hand, his eyes looked large and threatening. Presently, in a strangely altered voice he said: 'Bessie is no child of yours, and concerns you not.'

'I beg your pardon, Richard,' said Josephine, after a constrained pause. She was hurt by his rebuff, though she acknowledged to her heart that it was deserved. 'I am sorry that I spoke petulantly the other night; but you must acknowledge that you did a very unwise thing—certain to exasperate me. You put me in a most awkward dilemma.'

She waited for a reply. None came. 'Tell me, Richard, is poor dear Bessie gravely injured? I have heard no particulars. Tell me how it happened.'

'How it happened!' he repeated hoarsely,

and rose to his feet, because he could not bear the sun on his face as he spoke with her. 'Ay! I will tell you how it happened.—Stand off! Do not come near the child. Away from this side. The shadow of you has fallen on her and fallen on me already. Your shadow blights.'

In truth, she had stepped into the sunbeam and had intercepted it. Now she moved on one side; she was humbled, not greatly, nor had she changed her determination, bred of her father's advice, to separate from Cable; but she was touched and pained by the sight of the suffering child, and its equally suffering father.

'I will tell you all,' he said in a tone charged with suppressed thunder. 'You were right when you said at Brentwood that I was drunk. It is true I was drunk when I did it. It was because I was drunk that I let my Bessie fall. I had rather, ten thousand times, have broken my own back and lain a crippled, tortured creature thus—through an eternity—than have hurt her. That God knows—if—if He knows and cares for aught that goes on below.' He did not salute, as he named the Almighty, as in the former times.

'I am very, very sorry, Richard.'

'I do not want your compassion,' he re-

torted fiercely. 'I loathe it—I despise it. It was your doing that my poor baby lies here——'

'Richard,' interrupted Josephine, with a flash of anger at what she conceived his injustice, 'because you forgot your self-respect and drank, and let Bessie fall, am I to be blamed? This is too much.'

'I do blame you,' he said. 'It is all your doing. Was I ever drunk before? Never—never! My mother can tell you that. And why did I drink at the "Anchor," but because you had stung and insulted me past endurance! I forgot my self-respect! I had none. You had kicked it and trampled it in the dirt. You had killed it. I always held up my head and could check myself. I never did anything that could bring shame on my face, and tears in my mother's eyes before, because I respected myself. But you would not rest till you had beaten my self-respect down and ground it into dust. I drank because of the pain in my heart, and to forget what you had done to me. Then—after poor Bessie was hurt—I ran to find you. Now, I see I was mad or drunk to run to one so heartless, so cruel; but in the moment of my despair, I forgot all the wrong you had dealt me, and remembered only the tie that bound us. I ran to you, because I was burning with

thirst, as a man in a desert runs when he sees far away green leaves that promise a well. I ran to you for pity and love, and you mocked and beat me from you.' His breath came with a hoarse rattle from his labouring lungs. 'And now you have come to see the wreck you have made; not of my sweet baby only—but of me —of *me*.' He came up to her with every muscle in his face and throat distended, and with clenched hands and nerves that stood as knots in his wrists and arms.

Josephine stepped back. 'Are you going to strike me, Richard?'

'No,' he said, 'I do not touch women. I almost wish I could seize you by the throat and wring your venomous tongue out, as I might tear out the sting of a wasp. I love you no more. I loved you once, loved you!—you stood far above me as the silver moon. I thought you the most beautiful and holy and pure of beings; and now I see your soul is full of ugly pits and scars and blemishes; and your light has no warmth in it—it chills, it drives a poor stupid man like me crazed—so crazed that I have crushed and nigh killed my child. So crazed am I, that I have lost all I had once that made me happy—my content, my peace of mind, my trust. I have looked up at you, and been blasted; and now—I cannot look up

at all.' He clasped his hands over his head, and stood with widespread feet and elbows, glaring at her.

'I pitied you with all my heart,' he continued, 'when you once told me that you could not look up—and then, in my folly, I thought I would take you by the hand and hold you, and put my finger under your chin, and speak to you of love and faith and the trust of a little child to a loving Father, till your tossed heart grew still, and its fret passed away, and you raised your eyes to what is above us all. But I never, never supposed that you would drag me down and blind me, so that my power of looking up should be taken from me.'

He trembled with vehemence as he spoke, and Josephine was silent; she quailed before his indignation. Then he was silent, standing looking at her; and she glanced at him, to see if there was any softening in his face, any forgiveness in his stern eyes.

'Can you not see, Richard,' she said, 'that you tried me beyond endurance? I may have lacked consideration for you, but you also failed in thought for me. Forgive me.'

'No,' he answered; 'never—never!'

'Then,' she said, 'if that be so, it is best for us to part—to separate. We both of us made a mistake. I did not know what I was about

when I took you; and you over-estimated your powers when you accepted me.'

'Very well,' he said. 'We part; we see each other no more. But the past can never be undone; it can no more be repaired and made straight than the back of my poor baby, who is crippled for ever.'

'You blame me unreasonably,' remonstrated Josephine; 'you are blind to the wrongs done to me. Nothing is easier for a man who has made a mistake, than to toss the responsibility on to the back of another who is too weak to defend herself. Let me kiss little Bessie, and then I will leave you.'

'No,' he answered, 'you shall not touch her nor go near her.'

Then in at the door came his little troop of girls, returning from school—six, and as they entered, the sunbeam lit one golden crown after another. The sun's ray lay along the floor. Richard pointed it to his children. 'Mary, lead the way; all of you follow her; keep along in the sunbeam, and so come to me. Leave the lady in the shadow, in the dark; do not step out of the sunbeam to her—do not let her come near you.'

The docile children obeyed, walking in line, bathed in pure light, taking care not to put one little foot into the shadow.

Richard waited till they had all come to him and were gathered round the cradle, looking lovingly, expectantly, somewhat wonderingly, up at him. Then he waved his hand to Josephine, and said: 'Go out! Hanford Hall is your home, and this cottage my home. I banish you from my roof, as you have driven me from under yours.—Go!—Would to God, when I shut the door on you, I could drive the thought of you out as well, and be rid of the evil you have brought on me and mine, as I rid myself of your presence!'

CHAPTER XXXI.

GHOSTS.

A WEEK passed, and Cable did not reappear at the Hall. Josephine hardly expected that he would, but she half—more than half—wished that he would. He had loved her; she knew that, and it mortified her to think that his love had died so easily. She did not wish to live with him on the first footing; but she did not desire to part from him in anger and unforgiveness. She made no second attempt to see him. She nursed her resentment at the injustice she conceived he had shown, and hugged herself in her pride. It was not for her to step down to him. She had asked his pardon, and he had refused it. Now, he must come to her, and acknowledge that there had been fault on his part.

Mr. Cornellis said not a word. Everything was progressing as best accorded with his wishes. He might spoil, he could not mend, matters by putting his finger to them. Jose-

phine's indiscreet marriage and this speedy separation were most convenient to him. She was married to a man who could not interfere with him. He was left with the Hall as his home, and Josephine's fortune pretty well at his disposal. A husband of her own class of life would have taken the management of her affairs into his own hands, and would have required him and Judith to find some other home.

He did not understand Cable. He had visited him without mentioning it to his daughter, and had made him a handsome offer, to induce him to leave the place. His offer had been indignantly rejected. Why, Mr. Cornellis could not see. He supposed that Richard wanted to make better terms, and he was ready to offer them, but waited to see whether, on reconsideration, Cable would not come to his terms. Like all unprincipled men, he was incapable of admitting the existence of noble springs of action in others.

One morning, he came into the parlour with real surprise and perplexity in his face. 'Josephine,' he said, 'what do you think has happened? That Poor Richard of yours has given us the slip; he has gone off with all his chattels, living and inanimate.'

'Gone, papa!'

'Gone, and joy go with him—gone in the

yacht. He has kept the plan to himself. Last night, he cleared out, livestock and all, his mother and all the litter; and the vessel sailed this morning early; she went out with the tide.'

'Papa!—you do not mean this! Gone! Gone whither?'

'That is more than I can say; let us hope, to explore the North-west Passage. We will send no expeditions after them. If the polar bears eat them, may they find the Cables great and small to their taste; they are not to ours.'

Josephine made no response. She was too surprised to speak, and not a little distressed. Richard gone, and gone without a farewell—gone for how long? Gone, possibly, for ever. Something rose in her throat and choked her. It was well, perhaps, that he had departed; but it was not well that he had gone without taking her hand in both his, looking into her eyes, and then, with broken voices, asking each other's mutual forgiveness for the past mistakes and estrangement.

After remaining for some time silent, thinking, and half disposed to cry, Josephine said: 'Papa, do make inquiries. I must know whither he has gone; I cannot endure uncertainty.'

'You will not charter a vessel and sail after him?'

'No, papa; but I want to know where he is. Has he left no message, not a note, for me?'

'Not a word, which is perhaps fortunate: a word would have been pronounced, and a letter spelled, wrong.'

'Don't speak like that, papa—it—it pains me.'

'Indeed! You have become sensitive very suddenly.'

There is a kind of woman widely dispersed throughout the civilised world who not only eats nothing but veal, but looks upon it as her proper destiny to bleed calves and reduce their flesh to a condition of veal. To their minds, veal is the only allowable food: the woman who touches beef is to be shunned as a dangerous person. To suit the taste of these women, everything must be reduced to a condition of veal—the lifeblood, the colour, the warmth, be bled out of it. These women precipitate themselves, as by natural gravitation, into the arms of ministers of religion, because they find in their minds the nearest approach to intellectual veal, and listen in sweet complacency to their sermons, which are elocutionary veal. Their favourite reading consists of insipid and harmless novels, in which is neither fire of passion nor spark of originality. To feel deeply, to think

independently, are to them tokens of a beefy nature, demanding the lancet and the letting of blood. They delight in pale colours, half-tints, weak morality, milk-puddings, and afternoon teas. If they could get their tea to draw without the water being raised to a boil, it would please them well.

A century ago, every man went to the barber in spring and was 'let blood;' and our grandmothers all underwent a similar veal-producing process, morally, spiritually, mentally; nowadays, a few dashing calves kick up their heels and frisk about the field and refuse to submit to have their jugular cut.

All respect to the good women who go about with their lancets and little measures for blood; veal is an excellent meat; we must be thankful to them for producing it; but they exceed their province, they excite our remonstrance, when they insist on our eating nothing but veal. The best meat may pall on us, when we have no variety, and to some stomachs, veal is positively indigestible. But these veal-eating women are apt to be censorious, and to damn —but hush! the word is too strong—to condemn everything that contains all but a modicum of blood.

Aunt Judith was a veal-eater: she was a worthy woman, of narrow intellect and com-

monplace mind. Her brother was somewhat of a trial to her; her niece, a very grievous one. The boldness of character, the independence of thought in Josephine, frightened her. She could not understand her brother. More than half his sarcasms glinted off the surface of her mind, incapable of receiving them and feeling their point.

Josephine sat with her aunt in the afternoon, but was scarce conscious of her presence. Her mind was away on the sea, following the yacht over the blue waves and the foaming white horses. In which direction were the bows turned? What was the plan in Richard's brain?

It is a strange fact that a woman rarely appreciates the force of her own stabs. She regards the wounds she deals as light matters, to be easily patched over and quickly healed. That they should go down to the bone, be liable to fester—that they should leave permanent scars, never enters her head. So now, Josephine laid little weight on the provocation she had given; and she resented the conduct of Richard in leaving her without an interview, as an undeserved injury.

Aunt Judith broke in on her reverie by saying: 'I wonder when Mr. Cable will return. Perhaps he has taken the children a sail for

change of air. I feel a want of a change myself.'

'I do not think he will return,' said Josephine. 'He has taken the furniture of the cottage with him.'

'What has made him do that?'

'He is no doubt going to make a home elsewhere.'

'Why should he leave Hanford?' asked Judith.

'He has been uncomfortable in this house; he is not accustomed to the restraints of our mode of life,' replied Josephine.

'Uncomfortable! The dinner has always been well cooked. What more can he desire?'

'It was not the food which disagreed with him.'

'It is a pity that he should go, considering who he is,' muttered Judith Cornellis.

'Who he is? He has been a fish out of water.'

'I do not mean that,' said Aunt Judith. 'Considering who he is, he ought to be here. Of course he has told you about himself and his origin?'

'I do not understand. Of course I know——'

'Then you know that in common justice he ought to be in this house. I think Gabriel

behaved very badly in the matter. I know I have not much cleverness; but I can see that Mr. Cable has been hardly treated. Your father says that man is an intelligent animal, and woman also—intermittently. I suppose I have an intermittent interval of intelligence now and then; and it does seem to me very hard on Richard Cable that he, being the son of Gabriel Gotham, should not have this house and estate as his own; or, at all events, that he should not have been provided for independently.'

'Richard—Gabriel Gotham's son?'

'Yes, of course. He must have told you the story. Your father did not wish you to know it before you were married; but now that you are Mrs. Cable, there is no objection to our talking about it.'

'Richard never said a word about this to me. I am quite sure he did not know who was his father. Yes—I am positive—he told me that himself; and he never said what was false.'

'He did not know? Nonsense, my dear; of course his mother told him.'

'Aunt, I am convinced to the contrary. You do not understand Mrs. Cable. She is very proud, as proud as if she were a lady. And

Richard feels so delicately, that I know he would ask her nothing.'

'Mrs. Cable always was a proud and reserved woman. She refused a very handsome allowance that was offered her by the family, when the marriage was annulled.'

'Gabriel and she were married?'

'Yes; they were married in Scotland. He ran away with her from Newcastle. It was an unusual course, and therefore very wrong, and it brought after it the natural consequences of all wrong-doing.'

'But, aunt, how is it, if they were married, that Mrs. Cable did not live with Cousin Gotham, and bear his name?'

'Because the marriage was annulled. By Scottish law, those who are married must have resided a certain number of days in the country. They had not been the full time by five hours, so that the marriage was declared illegal.'

'But — how monstrous! — why did not Cousin Gabriel come with her to England and get married again? That would have made all right.'

'He found that he had made a mistake; and he took advantage of the legal flaw to slip out of the marriage.'

'But—Aunt Judith — the child — I mean Richard?'

'My dear, of course, as the marriage was invalidated, Richard was illegitimate. The marriage was annulled before he was born.'

Josephine started from her chair and went to the window.

'When Gabriel married Bessie Cable, he was young and inconsiderate, and soon discovered they were an ill-assorted pair. His father and uncle used their influence, and he made no objection to a separation.'

Josephine's face flamed. She stood at the window looking out.

'You see now what I mean,' pursued Judith Cornellis. 'If it had not been for that slip of five hours, Richard Cable would be Richard Gotham, and Squire of Hanford.'

'It was infamous—infamous!' muttered Josephine.

'I cannot say that it was right of Gabriel not to acknowledge him, or at least to leave him a provision in his will. But then—as you married Richard, all seemed to settle itself practically, and the injustice to rectify itself; but now, all is wrong again. You perceive, my dear, how wrong it is to take a course which is unusual; it lands in all kinds of difficulties.'

'It was infamous—infamous!' repeated Josephine.

'I would hardly use so strong a term,' said Miss Cornellis. 'It was inconsiderate, perhaps, of Gabriel Gotham, and a little failing in justice to Richard Cable. But perhaps Gabriel considered that as Bessie Cable refused everything that was offered her, she might influence her son to adopt the same obstinate and unreasonable conduct.'

'She comes out best—far, far the best in the whole ugly story,' said Josephine vehemently. 'How could Cousin Gabriel be so base—so shabby?'

'My dear, it was a most unsuitable match. If you and Richard had been married in Scotland, and there was a flaw of five hours, would you not be glad now to seize the occasion?'

'No, no! It was despicable; it was taking advantage of the poor woman's ignorance.'

'I am sure that Gabriel was equally ignorant at first. It was only when the matter was looked into that the flaw was found.'

'Aunt,' said Josephine, crossing the room, pulling a withered flower out of a vase, then going to the window again, and then to the table to arrange the books—'aunt, I feel like a robber. I have driven Richard away out of this house. I have taken all the money, all the land, everything to myself, which by equity belongs to him.'

'I wish you would not dash about in the room like a bird that has got in and cannot find its way out. Sit down, and talk of this matter easily.'

'I cannot. I cannot keep my hands or my feet quiet. I am tingling in all my nerves. I feel as if I had committed a dreadful crime. If I tease you, I will go out. I must speak about this to papa.'

'My dear—on no account!' exclaimed Miss Cornellis, in a tone of alarm. 'He would be very angry with me for mentioning it to you.'

'But why was I not told before? How long have you known this?'

'Oh, for many years. It has been a family scandal, that has been hushed up.'

'I ought to have been informed of the circumstances. I would never have accepted Cousin Gabriel's estate.'

'You could not help yourself. It was left, not directly to you, but to trustees for your use.'

'It was wrong in you, in my father, not to tell me everything. I cannot remain still. I irritate you with my pacing about. I cannot help myself. I must see papa.'

'He is out now, and will not be in for some hours.'

'That is as well. I will go to the windstrew and sit there. I am so agitated, so angry, so surprised. This is sprung on me. I have been shamefully treated. I ought not to have been kept in ignorance.'

She swept out of the room. She felt the necessity for being alone. This strange revelation was fraught with consequences not to be gauged in a minute. What was that which Mrs. Cable had said about the cuckoo turning the little birds out of their parent's nest? She was the cuckoo; she had taken to herself the nest that of right belonged to Richard; she had done more—she had driven him, his mother, and children, out of their own modest cottage as well. Could she sit still and ruffle her plumes, and spread her feathers, and occupy the nest that was not hers by right, leaving them outcasts?

Why had her father kept the secret so closely from her? She shrank from the conclusion. Why, knowing what he did, had he counselled her to insult her husband and drive him away? She shrank from the answer she made to herself. At once, with great determination, she resolved not any more to ask advice of and be guided by her father's opinion. She must think out the situation for herself, form her own resolution, and act on it, in

defiance of every remonstrance from him or Aunt Judith. *He* would stand in the way of her doing what was just, and *she* would object to what was unusual. Josephine sat on the windstrew, her head spinning, hot rushes of anger sweeping through her arteries, followed by cold qualms of heart-sickness. As she thus sat, her fingers plucked at the breasting of bricks, peeled away flakes of velvety moss, scratched out scraps of mortar, picked away chips of brick, and flung them over the unprotected side among the broken potsherds. She looked over and saw a mouldering collection of garden refuse—old geranium roots turned out of their pots, and half-decayed flower-sticks, the fragments of a shattered garden vase of terra-cotta, the accumulation of years of broken flower-pots—a home for the slug and the centipede and the wood-louse. This was the bed on which Gabriel Gotham had fallen, a bed that truly symbolised his mind.

Josephine could not shake the thought of Gabriel out of her head, now that she had looked on the place where he had fallen and met his death. As she sat on the windstrew, with the smell of decay steaming up from the refuse-heap, his feeble, shivering ghost seemed to rise out of it and shake its hands deprecatingly, and jabber an appeal for pitiful con-

sideration. She had been throwing the bits of mortar and brick down where he had fallen, and with them had cast hard and reproachful thoughts at the dead man. She could not thank him for what he had done for her; he had enriched her at the cost of a gross injustice committed on his son. What an utterly mean, selfish creature Gotham had been! His roundabout way of compensating Richard through her had been on a par with all his tortuous methods through life.

She could not endure to remain on the windstrew surrounded with sights that brought Cousin Gotham before her; she would go to the cottage, to a healthier atmosphere, and satisfy herself whether her father had spoken the truth. It was possible that Mr. Cornellis, in all things false, had deceived her in this particular also. So she went out at the garden gate and along the seawall. This was her shortest way, and it suited her best. She did not wish to be seen in the road; she thought that everyone she passed would look reproachfully at her. She could not endure to encounter their eyes. She went along the wall to the sandy path that led from the village to the shore, then by the moat to the bridge, and over the bridge into the garden. All was there as if nothing had occurred. The beds were in

beautiful order; the vine on the roof showed a hundred little bunches of swelling berries. This year no little children would sit upon the stages of the ladder, looking for the purple fruit their father would pass down to them. She had spoiled that pleasure for them. There was the slope with the bed of thyme and marjoram and mint, where the little ones sat in the sun, and baby Bessie went to sleep with fragrant herbs crushed in her little hands. She had spoiled that pleasure for them likewise. The scarlet-runners that Richard had staked were in bloom, in scarlet, and there were no little eyes to admire the lovely flowers.

She went to the house and tried the door. It was fast. But she know how that there was a loose pane in the scullery window beside the back door, which could be removed, and the hand thrust in and the bolt drawn back. Cable had told her of this contrivance, by means of which he could enter into his house at all times without disturbing the inmates. She removed the pane, and easily unfastened the door. Then she entered. The house was deserted, and almost wholly cleared of its contents; but it was unlike most abandoned dwellings, for it had been cleaned and tidied before it was left. The few things that remained,

hardly worth removal, had been placed in order. There was a plain solid deal table in the centre of the kitchen that had not been removed. Against the wall, in the corner, was the cradle, reversed, the rockers upwards. 'How like Richard,' thought Josephine. 'He has turned the little crib over, that the dust may not fall into it.'

He had not taken the cradle away. Bessie was grown almost too big for a cradle, and he would never have another baby. A slight quiver passed from Josephine's heart to her finger-ends.

The brick floor had been swept, the hearth tidied, the cinders were brushed into a little heap. Something white showed among them. Josephine knelt on the dead hearth, put her hand to the ashes, and extracted some scraps of card. They were her mounted cabinet photograph, torn twice across, downwards and sidewards, with a firm hand. So had Richard taken the thought, the memory of Josephine out of his heart and cast it from him for ever. A pang shot through the breast of Josephine, as though his hand were on her heart and were tearing it twice across, downwards and laterally. She threw the scraps of the despised portrait on the ground, then stooped and picked them up. 'He would not wish any scraps—even these—

to litter about;' and she replaced them among the cinders.

There was no resentment in her bosom now: all her wrath against Richard had died away; her sense of wrong was swallowed up in the thought of the great injustice done to him.

She wondered whether she could find anywhere in the house a photograph of himself. She had never seen one. He was too modest to think of being taken; but it was not improbable that his mother had insisted on his being photographed when he was younger, and there was a chance, a poor chance, of a copy being left behind. She ascended the staircase and looked about the bedrooms. There were nails in the walls where little looking-glasses and pictures and texts had hung; but there were no photographs; nothing left but the nails and one illuminated text, 'When all these things come upon you—then LOOK UP.'

The bedrooms were quite empty; the floor had been recently washed, and had not a foot-mark on it. The blinds had been removed from the windows. The rooms looked utterly forlorn. She came sadly downstairs again.

In a corner of the kitchen was a shelf with drawers let into the wall—a fixture, therefore not removed. On the shelf was a bundle of

old clothes of the children, neatly pinned together—rags, no longer fit for wear by them; and in the drawers was a small straw hat, tied up in Richard's blue pocket-handkerchief—that handkerchief at which she had sneered. The little hat had perhaps been forgotten; perhaps it was not wanted, and Richard had left purposely the handkerchief, which would remind him of one of his wife's sarcasms. She unknotted the ends of the kerchief and took it in her hand.

From the ceiling in the kitchen, depending from a crook, hung a fresh bunch of everlastings, pink-and-white flowers of that summer, not yet dried, hung head downwards, that they might dry expanded. Then Josephine's heart swelled up, and she choked. Hastily she drew the inverted cradle from the wall and put it near the table, under the tuft of fading everlastings, and sat down on the cradle, between the rockers, and put her face into her hands and cried. It was as though the spirit of Richard Cable rose before her out of the cold ashes on the hearth, from among the torn fragments of her own likeness—not the spirit of the wounded, angry, unforgiving, despairing man, as she had last seen him, but as of old, gentle, humble, full of divine trust and love.

She cried long; her own little white hand-

kerchief was soaked, and she wept tears of bitter self-reproach into the great blue dish-clout she had so scorned ; and when the fountain of her tears dried, then she held the kerchief to her aching heart, and presently again buried her face in it. There was nought ridiculous to her now in the blue handkerchief with its white spots.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BENEATH THE EVERLASTINGS.

THE night had closed in, and still Josephine sat on the overturned cradle. The tears had dried up; but she continued to occupy the same place, holding Richard's handkerchief clasped in both her hands on her lap, looking straight before her into vacancy—lost in thought. A soft, yellowish-grey light filled the little window; but within the cottage kitchen all was dark—or, at best, was in deep twilight. Josephine had not moved for an hour. Her face was away from the window, in complete shadow. All at once a flash fell on her. She looked heavily up, with half consciousness, to see her father and the rector before her.

'I knew she would be here,' said the latter.

'I did not suppose her such a fool,' muttered Mr. Cornellis.

'Then you see I knew her best,' said the rector. 'Josephine.' He put out his hand, and

she listlessly put her own into it. She liked and trusted Mr. Sellwood, who had known her from infancy.

'My dear child,' he said, 'your hand is cold and wet.'

'I have been crying,' she answered simply.

'You must need your dinner,' said her father. 'We have put it off, and off, awaiting you, and the soles will be burned to chips.'

She said nothing in reply to her father, but her fingers closed on the rector's hand as he was withdrawing it. 'I want to speak to you, Mr. Sellwood—alone,' she said. 'Would you mind remaining here with me a little while?'

'But, Josephine,' said her father, 'dinner is spoiling; consider the soles.'

'Please go home, papa, and eat the soles; I will not detain you. The matter about which I wish to speak is one I desire to speak about to the rector alone.'

Mr. Cornellis considered for a moment. Josephine was fretting at the departure of her husband. Girls never know their own minds. It was perhaps natural that she should feel for awhile his sudden disappearance. In a day or two this chagrin would pass and the sense of relief prevail. It might relieve Josephine's mind to talk the affair over with Mr. Sellwood; it could do no possible harm. She was a girl

who acted on her own impulses and took no advice which did not agree with her own wishes. The rector might, and probably would, advise that she should open communication with Richard Cable and urge him to return. This evening she might agree with him; to-morrow she would come to a better mind.

Mr. Cornellis shrugged his shoulders. 'I will leave the lantern with you,' he said, 'to help and lighten your consultation.'

When he was gone the rector set the lantern on the floor, and said: 'Well, Josephine, you want my advice?'

'O no, Mr. Sellwood; I have made up my mind. I want you to tell me how I can carry out my own intentions.'

'Well done, young woman! This is frankly put. It is not always that your sex is so outspoken. They ask advice, and follow it only if agreeable to their own fancies.'

'I want to tell you everything, rector,' she said. 'I have acted very foolishly—I mean very wrongly. I have worked a vast amount of mischief, and now I have been trying to find out how I may undo it.'

'What have you done? Tell me that first; and secondly, what you are going to do to mend it. Then I will give you my advice.'

'I do not ask your advice.'

'Oh, I beg pardon; I forgot,' said the old parson somewhat testily. 'I give you fair warning I will not lend my hand to any starscraping, scatterbrained scheme. You may not seek my advice—you may not value it; but the experience of a man of over sixty is worth something.'

'Indeed, indeed, dear Mr. Sellwood, I value your opinion, your advice, most highly; but this is a case in which I must decide for myself. I have done one wrong after another, an injustice in ignorance, a wrong wilfully; and it appears to me clear as the day that I, and I alone, can work out my course for the future so as to amend the mischief. If you approve, I am very glad; but if not, I cannot help it. I must go my own way, or sin against my conscience. I know very well that my father will not approve—he and I see everything differently; and Aunt Judith will be indignant, and call my conduct wicked, because it is not commonplace.'

'Never mind about Aunt Judith. You are too severe.'

'Mr. Sellwood,' said Josephine, 'would you mind sitting on the table whilst I talk to you?'

'I will sit anywhere, my dear, to please

you—anywhere but in a bishop's throne, and that—no—not for any one.'

'Then I will remain here on poor little Bessie's cradle, at your feet.'

'But not in a childlike spirit and in the mental attitude of a disciple, you headstrong piece of goods. You have made up your mind—to what pray? How long have you taken forming it? A solid judgment is a first requisite in the making up of minds, and that—excuse me—you lack.'

'I have been very unhappy. I have cried till I have wet dear Richard's handkerchief through.'

'So at last there is some community established between you. Both use the same pocket-handkerchief.'

'Mr. Sellwood, I will tell you everything; but please not to interrupt me in my story.'

The rector, who loved to hear his own voice, was nettled. 'I am to pass no comments, as I am to tender no advice. Well, I will do my best; but I cannot promise silence.'

'And yet you expect us to sit quiet when you preach, whether we agree with you or not.'

The rector winced. 'Go on,' he said. 'After that I must be silent.'

Then she told him the whole story of Gabriel Gotham and Bessie, as she had heard

it from her aunt; and it filled the rector with astonishment. He had not heard anything of it before. 'Bless me!' he exclaimed, 'Mrs. Cable is a wonderful woman to keep her mouth shut! Proud—proud as Beelzebub.'

'A noble pride; not devilish,' said Josephine.

'Yes,' he said; 'I admit the correction—a proud-hearted woman, a grand woman! There are not many like her.'

Then Josephine told him how she had only come to a knowledge of this a few hours ago.

'And already made up your mind upon it!' exclaimed the parson. He could not refrain from making his comments.

'Mr. Sellwood,' Josephine went on—she withdrew her hand from his and folded her arms over her bosom, but did not let go her hold of the blue handkerchief—'Mr. Sellwood, I have acted very wickedly. I daresay I acted without a wise discretion in marrying Richard. I was not in love with him.'

'Then why in the world did you marry him? That was your sole excuse for committing an act of folly, and you have cast it from you.'

'It was this which drove me to it. Papa was so disagreeable with me about him; he said such things that I was angry, and became defiant. Aunt Judith was stupid—as she always is—and I felt an inclination to fly in her face

and thoroughly shock her. Then I got into that awkward predicament on the seawall at midnight, when you and Captain Sellwood came upon me with Richard. After that matters were complicated by Cousin Gotham; I believe he did it purposely. He gave Richard the boat —in my name, and had the boat called by my name, and encouraged talk in the place about me and Richard, which made me very uncomfortable and my father very angry, and I did not see how I could get out of the hobble, into which I had been partly thrust and had partly slipped, in any other way. I was nearly mad with annoyance and wounded vanity and irritated self-will. But that was not all. I saw that Richard was so natural, open, good, and true, and I felt so utterly at a loss where to look for a guide. My father——'

'Never mind about your father.'

'I could not follow his advice, and I did not feel that I was secure in my own opinion of right and wrong. I suppose all women look for someone to whom to cling.'

'My advice you never thought of asking for,' said the rector in a tone fraught with mortified pride. 'You seek me only to tell you how you may be enabled to follow your own whims without inconvenience.'

'Do not be cross with me, Mr. Sellwood,'

pleaded Josephine. 'I cannot explain to you exactly how I was situated at home. Somehow papa and I never had much in common, and we did not share confidences. I was driven to battle out my own way, sometimes going wrong, and sometimes right.'

'Many times wrong, and sometimes right,' suggested the rector.

'Possibly so.' She paused, considered, and then said: 'No; I do not think it. When I have gone wrong I have been influenced from without. As for marrying Richard—that was not wrong, except in Aunt Judith's table of commandments, in which all that is not usual is wrong. No'—she spoke with the earnestness of sincerity—'I really believe that the prevailing thought in me was that in Richard I should find an ideal man of truth and honour, and that is why I took him.'

'Mercy on me!' exclaimed the rector. 'Because a man can drive a donkey-cart that does not qualify him to drive a locomotive. Richard was all very well in his own sphere, but you transferred him to one he knew nothing about, in which he could not possibly assist you.'

'I see that clearly enough now,' said Josephine humbly. 'I did not see it till too late; and then when I became aware of it I got im-

patient with him; I lost my temper because he could not accommodate himself immediately to his new position. I exacted of him the impossible.'

'To be sure you did.'

'I made no allowances for him. I was irritated and spoke rudely, insultingly to him. I even ridiculed this dear old blue handkerchief, which'—the tears began to trickle down her cheeks again—'which is now wet with my contrite tears.'

The kind old rector took her hand and patted it between his own. 'My dear,' he said, 'all will come right in the end now; you have begun at the right end—with repentance.'

'But he is gone away—gone with all his children and his mother, without even saying a good-bye. I have driven him out of his home. That is not all. You know his story now; you see that the Hall and the manor ought in common fairness to be his. What an injustice—what a wicked injustice I have done him!'

'I am glad you acknowledge your faults, Josephine; that is the first step towards making all well again.'

'This is nothing like all I have done, rector. I have spoiled the goodness that was in Richard. I have made him morose, bitter, and mistrust-

ful. Even that is not all. It was through my fault that the poor little child was hurt. I had so angered him that when he went to the "Anchor" he drank too much and then——'

'Yes, I know the rest.' Mr. Sellwood said no more; for once he was silent. He was touched by the self-accusation of the girl, and he did not know, for once also, what to advise.

'Richard was so gentle, so full of thought for others, and pity for those who suffered in any way, so helpful to all who were weak; and now he is quite changed. He is sullen at one moment, fierce at the next. He no longer loves me—he told me so; and I know, I do know, that only a little while ago he loved me with his whole honest, noble heart. He has torn up my picture and thrown it among the ashes.'

'He cannot tear you out of his memory.'

'But he can remember me only as the murderess of his happiness, as the one person who maimed his child. He can remember me only as an offender who is past being forgiven.'

'I do not think it,' said the rector. 'Love is not killed so quickly. It may sink into the ground and disappear, like a spring in drought; but it will break up again, and flow as before.'

'No, Mr. Sellwood; he will never love me again till I am quite changed from what I have

been. I have been sitting here for a long time —how long I do not know—considering what is to be done. Things must not remain as they are.'

'Exactly; and if you ask my advice——'

'I do not; I have made up my mind.'

'I beg your pardon; I forgot.' He was a little huffed, and took away his hand from Josephine.

'Do not let me go,' she pleaded. 'I do not want to offend you; I have no one else to whom I can open my heart.'

He took her hand again and pressed it, in assurance of his regard.

'Well, Mr. Sellwood, I have been turning the whole miserable muddle out, and arranging my thoughts and putting them in order, just as Richard would tidy everything into its proper place. There are a lot of things mixed together, and these I have sorted into their several lockers. First come Cousin Gotham's money and estate. I have no right to them. They belong in all fairness to Richard; that I see clearly; so I will have nothing more to do with them.'

The rector started.

'Tell me,' she asked—'tell me, frankly, what you think?'

'In law——'

'That is like my Aunt Judith. Because Cousin Gotham was five hours short of his legal time in Scotland, therefore what is wrong is right.'

'It is you now, Josephine, who interrupt. By law, you have a perfect, unassailable right to everything left by Mr. Gotham. Whether you are justified in accepting and keeping his bequest, under the circumstances, morally and in honour, is another matter.'

'There! there!' she exclaimed almost exultantly. 'You see I riddled out that conundrum right. The property belongs to Richard. He shall have it. I will not touch a penny of it more.'

'But what of your father?'

'My father must manage for himself. I see my course plain before me. I go straight my own way, and put wax in my ears, so as not to hear any voice from outside, however sweetly singing.'

'Go on, then. What next?'

'In the next place, I acknowledge that I did wrong in requiring Richard to shape himself to fit a position for which he was unsuited.'

'Right again,' said the rector.

'At his age it is not possible for him to adapt himself, in every external, to what is required of him. In heart and mind, rector—

oh, he is the truest gentleman! a Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche.*'

Mr. Sellwood smiled at her enthusiasm.

'It would have been different, had he been quite a young man; but he is past the age when all the mental bones are flexible,' said Josephine.

'I do not know that—with patience and in time——'

'No, rector; he must not again be subjected to the restraint and torture. He must be allowed to go his own simple way, unhampered by artificial checks and unteased by conventional regulations.'

'Then what do you propose?'

'If we are to be reconciled, if he is ever to be happy with me, the disparity between us must disappear.'

'But how? You have just said he is too old to learn our social habits.'

'Precisely; but I can go down to his level.'

'My dear!—What do you mean?'

'Do you not see that the only chance of our living happily together is for us to be on an equal footing? He has tried my level, and cannot sustain himself on it. I must take his.'

'That is not practicable.'

'Pardon me—it is. Do you not see that one step in this course I have mapped out leads

to another? I have said that I will not have his money. Therefore, I have nothing of my own. What I had has been dissipated. I have not a penny. What must I do, then? I must earn my livelihood.'

'Good gracious, Josephine!' The rector sprang from the table on which he had been seated.

'I must learn to think and feel and see things as Richard does, through eyes on the same plane as his—so only shall we be able to understand each other. That is not all. He is very angry with me now, and nothing else that I can do will convince him of my repentance and of my desire for reconciliation.'

'Earn your living! Goodness gracious me!'

'All fits together perfectly, rector. I shall earn his esteem at the same time that I am acquiring the modes of thought and habits of a lower grade in life.'

'Upon my word!' exclaimed Mr. Sellwood, 'you are a person who always rushes into extremes.' He was astonished beyond measure.

'Extreme measures alone suit the occasion,' answered Josephine. 'As I utterly renounce my claim on the property, I can do no other than earn my bread, and by so doing I gain my chief end.'

'But how will you earn your bread?'

'I will go into service. His first wife was a maid in your house, and he was happy with her.'

'You must not do this—it will be degradation.'

'I must do it. It will be no degradation, morally, for I have a right end in view.'

The rector was greatly shaken. 'I would never have advised this; I would never have thought of this.'

'I knew that; therefore I did not ask your advice.'

Mr. Sellwood remained silent. He could not grasp her bold proposal all at once. Josephine waited. She had become calm as she spoke of her resolution. She waited for him to say something. Presently, he said in a choking voice: 'I retract what I let fall just now. There will be, there can be no degradation. On the contrary, there will be a rise of your better self. My dear, this is very wonderful to me. Your female instinct is a better guide than my masculine sense. I should never have thought of this. Even now, I cannot say whether it commends itself to my reason; to my heart, it does at once, at once!' He was much moved. 'Josephine, in such a daring venture, guidance and help are needed.'

Then he paused again. Presently he went on: 'Josephine, perhaps you have read that, in old times, pearls were found in the Severn, and British pearls were much esteemed. Do you know how they were found? Horses and cattle were driven across the fords in the Severn, and they trampled on, bruised, and broke the mussel shells that lay there; then the crushed mussels in their pain exuded the matter that formed the pearls. Now that bridges have been built to span the Severn, no more pearls are found in it; for, though there are mussels still in the shallow water, they remain only mussels; they produce no longer pearls, because no longer bruised and broken. My dear Josephine, I think—I believe, that the pearl of a nobler and a truer life is beginning to grow in you, because the feet are passing over you and treading you down.'

'Rector,' said Josephine after a long silence, 'what are you looking at above me—the everlastings?'

He paused, he did not answer at once, he recovered himself slowly, and said softly: 'The Everlasting! Yes.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PENTARGON.

THE morning broke after a stormy night, broke wild and haggard. On the horizon a white shimmer under heavy clouds that would not rise, from which fell lashes of dark rain over the light—a shimmer cold and ghastly as that of the half-closed eye of a dead man. The sea raced inland, in rolling piled-up billows, shaking itself, roaring, spluttering, raging, bent on tearing itself to shreds on the cutlass-like reefs, and beating itself to liquid dust on the cuirass-like cliffs that defended the north Cornish coast. The wind had been blowing a hurricane all night, shifting a few points from south to north, but always with a main drive from the west, like the dogged determination of a madman making feints to throw his victim off his guard, but never swerving from his murderous purpose. The sea, heaped together, jostling billows, was caught and compressed between the horns of Padstow Point and Hartland. In

that vast half-moon, walled up to the sky with perpendicular iron-bound precipices, the white horses bounded and tumbled over each other, and rolled and were beaten down in the conflict. They plunged at the barriers and leaped high into the air, snorting foam, shaking their manes, and fell back broken, torn, to be trampled into the deeps by other billows, likewise rushing on their destruction. A vessel that enters within the bow of that vast arc, when the wind is on shore, is infalliby lost, and the 'Bessie' on the morning in question had been driven within the fateful limits.

As already mentioned, Mrs. Cable's mother was a Cornishwoman. Bessie Cable had never visited her mother's native county; but an occasional letter, perhaps once a year, had kept up a link between her and an old mining uncle, Zackie Pendarves, at St. Kerian. The man was now dead, and he had left his small savings and cottage to his only known relative, his niece Bessie, whom he had never seen. The bequest came opportunely; for when Richard told his mother of his intention to leave Hanford, she was able to propose that they should migrate to Cornwall and take up their residence in Uncle Zackie's house. What the size of that house was, how much land went with it, in what condition of repair the house was, that

was all unknown. Nevertheless, it was a freehold, their own; and the cottage at Hanford was held on a half-yearly tenancy. Richard at once agreed to his mother's proposal. At St. Kerian they would begin a new life, leaving behind them all disturbing recollections.

So Richard manned the yacht, and without allowing his purpose to transpire, shipped his family and goods away, sailed down Channel, doubled the Land's End, and was at once caught in a sudden storm. He had never been in these seas before; he knew nothing of the coast save what he could gather from his chart; but he saw that his only chance was to keep out to sea; and all night he struggled to make head against the gale. When the day broke, he saw that his efforts had been fruitless—the yacht had been driven within the threatening horns, terrible as Scylla and Charybdis. Neither Richard nor one of the crew had closed an eye all night; every man's energies had been at full strain. Cable had not been down into the cabin. Whether his mother slept or watched, he knew not; but she was probably aware of the danger. His dear little ones slumbered, confident of their safety whilst the father was in command on deck. They were not afraid of the water; the tossing of the sea did not trouble them. They were accustomed to it, as

tiny water-birds. Often, one or other had been taken to the lightship, and had been inured to the roll and pitch of a vessel, and they minded it no more than the baby minded the sway of the cradle. Why should they fear, any more than the baby that was rocked to sleep by grannie's foot? This was their father's great cradle, and the motion soothed their little brains.

All night long, hope had been strong in Cable's breast; he trusted that he had been able to tack against the wind and gain deep sea; but when morning dawned, he saw that their fate was sealed. From the sea, the coast, towards which wind and wave remorselessly impelled the boat, appeared as one sheer wall of rock, nowhere scooped out into harbours, nowhere retreating sufficiently to allow of beach at the feet of the mighty crags. Here and there on the top of the cliffs he could distinguish towers, the belfries of storm-beaten churches, cutting the dawning eastern light. And here and there a sea-mark, a turret, that indicated, perhaps, the entrance to some tortuous channel cleft in the precipices, up which a boat might wriggle in calm weather, but utterly impracticable in a storm.

The base of the cliffs was everywhere hidden in foam, and the spray was caught and

whirled about and churned up with the wind, so that nowhere could be distinguished a line of demarcation between sea and land. Water and air were shaken together into a belt of salt mist, impenetrable to the eye. Thus the head of the coast-wall stood up against the dawning light like a mountain ridge whose roots lie buried in curdy morning mists. If he could have distinguished anywhere a sandy cove, he would have run the 'Bessie' towards it; but, apparently, there was nothing before her but to be dashed against upright cliffs and go to pieces in deep water.

As Richard stood considering the prospect, and thinking whether it were advisable to run for a circular tower which seemed to indicate the entrance to a port, the mate and the rest of the crew came to him and insisted on taking to the boat. There was no chance for the vessel, none possible; there was one for a small boat, which could feel the shore for a landing-place. If there were a cleft where the tower stood—then a row-boat might be run in; it was more under control than a ship. They wanted Cable to bring up his mother and children and take them along with them. The only prospect of life lay in deserting the 'Bessie.'

Richard Cable heard them out with a frown and set teeth. Then he bade them take the

boat and begone. He and his would abide in the yacht and drown together in her. 'You drown your way—and I and mine will go down together our way,' he answered.

Jonas Flinders was one of the crew, and he urged Richard not to commit such a folly, that where there was a chance, he was bound to grasp it; but Richard was not to be moved. He took the wheel and signed the men away.

He watched the crew unswing the boat, get in, and leave the 'Bessie.' He watched them rowing, danced about on the waves, lashed by the spray, and then lost them in the drift. What became of them he could not tell. It was well that they were gone. If he must die with his darlings, let them die all together, without others by.

That boat never reached the land with its load. It came ashore in chips, and the men in scraps of flesh and bone, literally sliced to pieces on the razor-like blades of slate that ran out from the cliffs into the water.

Richard noticed that a flagstaff stood on a rock near the tower, and he suspected that if there were a channel, it lay between these; but the entrance was masked by an insulated rock standing out of the water like a gigantic meal-sack. He took a piece of rope and lashed the tiller fast, so that the bows were turned

directly towards the supposed entrance to a port. Then he went to the ladder leading to the cabin and descended slowly. He was in his dreadnaught, dripping with sea-water, his pilot-hat drawn over his brows, and the lappets covered his ears. When he came into the cabin, it was still dark there; only now and then, through a side-light, came a cold white gleam, and then it was blurred over by gray water. The pendent lamp, however, was still burning; but the oil was almost exhausted, and the wick was much charred, so that the light it gave was not bright. It had burned all night. Mrs. Cable had not slept all night; she knew the peril, and she kept watch. Now, all the children but tiny Bessie were awake, and their grandmother was dressing and washing them. Owing to the pitch of the vessel, the operation was conducted with difficulty. Richard Cable stood at the cabin entrance, holding the posts, and looking on. His mother was then combing out and smoothing on either side of her ears Mary's golden hair. Little Susie stood with her hands and face wet, asking to have them wiped. Did Mrs. Cable know that they were all about to die? She thought it very likely, but she washed and dressed the children as carefully as if they were going to a school-feast. If they must

go in an hour before the throne of God, they should go with their hair tidy, with white stockings and clean bibs, and Mary with the coral necklace round her throat that had belonged to her mother.

Richard looked steadily at the group, and said: 'Mother, when we strike, come on deck with all of them, and give me Bessie into my arms. You shall not drown down here, like mice in a cage.' Then with a deep frown he added: 'This also comes of her.'

'Richard,' said Mrs. Cable gravely, as she bound Mary's hair behind her head, 'it is not so. Forgive her now.'

'It cannot be;' in a louder tone—'I will not.'

'What! Richard? Not when we are about to appear before the great God?'

He shook his head. 'But for her, this would not have come upon us. Our death will lie at her door; all the miseries I have suffered through her are not enough. She must kill me and mine.'

'O Richard, do not be unforgiving!'

'I thought to wipe out the curse that comes with her name when I changed the title of the vessel; but the evil clings to us and drags us down.'

'Richard, I once had a bitter wrong done

me, worse than any that has touched you; but I forgave.'

'Mother, if this brought me alone to destruction, I could freely pardon; but when it carries along with me you and all—all that I love—I cannot; I will not. If I go to the judgment-seat above I will take all the seven with me and denounce her; and if there be justice in heaven, she shall suffer.' He gripped the rail as he turned and reascended the ladder, muttering as he went: 'I cannot—I will not.'

On deck again, he resumed his place at the tiller, and unlashed it. The 'Bessie' was running near the meal-sack rock, at which the waves raced as in frolic, or savagely bent on throwing it over, but instead of effecting this, were themselves whirled as waterspouts high into the air. The rocks in front seemed to tower two or three hundred feet out of the sea. Above them, the sky was brightening and the clouds parting. All at once, Richard saw a fissure in the face of the cliff, a mere rift, impossible for him to strike and pass through. As easily might a man thread a needle on horseback when hunting and the hounds are in full cry. On the left of the ness crowned by the flagstaff, the wall of rock sheered away inland and the cliffs seemed to be scooped out. Cable, with a tremendous effort, wrenched the

helm hard down, and brought the bowsprit with a swing round, so that the 'Bessie,' instead of running into the cleft, turned, cleared the flagstaff rock, and went on the ridge of a roller into a caldron or cove north of it. He drew his hand over his eyes and wiped the spray out of them, and saw that he had dived into a semicircular bay, walled up to heaven on every side but that by which he had entered, and in which the mad waves were thundering tumultuously. One side of the cove ended seaward in a mighty black headland, that overhung, without a ledge on it where seagull could nest or samphire take root. In the lap of the bay, where the rocks were not quite so high, a waterfall leaped down, and was lost below in the spondrift that filled the air. One moment more and all would be over. He left the wheel and went to the cabin door, and called: 'Come on deck.'

Then up came the children, Mary leading the way, clinging to the rail with one hand, and with the other helping little Martha to mount the brass-laid steps. Last of all appeared Mrs. Cable, carrying the baby. As each little head appeared, Richard, who knelt on one knee by the cabin hatchway, helped the child up, and put his arms round it, and gave it a long embrace and kiss—the last, he

thought, in this world. He said nothing; he could not speak. Bitter in his heart, bitter as the seabrine, tossed the anger against Josephine, who had brought this about.

Without a word, he took the babe from his mother, and then Mrs. Cable gave a hand to each of the youngest. So they stood, a little group on deck, looking at the remorseless, cruel shore, at the sweep of iron cliffs that engirdled them, about to hug them to death. Though so near, they could not see their feet, hidden in foam and spray. Around them shrieked and laughed the seamews. The wind whistled in the cordage. The water roared and hissed around.

Then Mrs. Cable stooped to the children's ears and said something that Richard could not hear; but at once, above the boom of the sea and the piping of the wind, he heard the little voices raised in song:

> Shall we meet beyond the river,
> Where the surges cease to roll,
> Where in all the bright For-ever,
> Sorrow ne'er shall vex the soul?

It was a song the children had learned at their Sunday school, a song of which their father was very fond, and which he had often made them warble to him. The poor, feeble, quavering voices were now out of tune and faint, with

the wonder and fear that fell on them at the sight of what was before; but they knew that their song would please their father, so they girded up their faltering courage and sang as loud and strong as they could:

Shall we meet in that blessed harbour,
When our stormy voyage is o'er?
Shall we meet and cast the anchor
By the far celestial shore?

And—see! above the head of the waterfall, towards which they were driving, through the rift it had sawn in the rocky wall, flashed the rising sun—it turned the head of the stream, as it took its final leap, into liquid gold, and the river seemed to pour from the very heart of the sun, bringing fire and life and hope down into the wild, gloomy abyss below.

Shall we meet with many loved ones
Who were torn from our embrace?

sang the little voices, and stopped—for, from out of the haze that hung between the sea and cliffs, leaped a fiery streak, like a flash of lightning, and something flaring, roaring, screaming, rushed over their heads; and a moment after, with a sharp crack like the report of a pistol, a rope fell athwart the deck. Those on shore had seen the wreck and had discharged a rocket over her. Richard knew at once that

all was not lost. He flew to the rope and made it fast.

In another moment the vessel struck, not on a reef, but on a shingly beach, and at the same moment a great sea struck her on stern and went up in spiral whirl, like a shaving before a plane, and washed the deck. Richard seized his little ones and drew them to him. The wave passed, and none was lost. Then he gave the baby to his mother, and took up Mary in his arms; she clung round his neck, lacing her hands behind, fastening herself to him as a ferret holds to his prey. She was a shrewd child, and she knew what her father was about to do. He needed not to tell her. She put her lips to his cold wet cheek. Then he grasped the rocket-rope, and went over the side with her into the boiling foam.

Whilst he was away, Mrs. Cable drew the children half down the cabin ladder, where they might be safe from the seas which struck the vessel and swept the deck. Every sea drove the 'Bessie' deeper into the shingle and farther up the shore; she was steadied, but exposed to the full force of the waves.

Presently, from out of the leaping water, with the froth dripping from him, came Cable again, clinging to the rope, followed by two men from the shore; and the rest of the

children and Mrs. Cable were conveyed in safety to land. Most difficulty was found with the babe, as little Bessie could not be relied on to cling. She must be held in one arm, and the rope grasped with the other. Richard would let no one take her but himself, and he succeeded in bringing her through. He was now much exhausted, numbed with cold, and his limbs shook. He would not yield up the child. The danger was yet not over.

The cove into which the yacht had been run was that of Pentargon. It has a small rubbly strand, which can only be reached from the top of the cliffs by an arduous path, which, as it nears the base, passes over shale that lies upon slate-shelves steeply inclined downwards, over which water dribbles. By this perilous way alone could the little party ascend; by this, with great difficulty, had the coastguard brought the rocket apparatus, when from the look-out they saw the little vessel driven into the cove.

The sturdy coastguardmen gave their hands to the children, to help them to ascend the steep slope over the treacherous shelf, where a fall might precipitate them over a ledge upon the shingle-beach or into the water.

'I will come last, with the baby,' said Cable. So the procession formed. Each must

mount singly, staying up a child. There was nothing to cling to; every step must be taken with precaution in the loose and sliding shale.

Richard held the smallest child well wrapped under his dreadnaught. She was awake, frightened, cold and fretful, and her sobs and impatience at being covered up harassed Richard, already spent with his watchful night and struggles through the waves with the children. He raised the flap of his coat, put down his head, and spoke soothingly to the infant. His voice usually had great effect in lulling her cries when in pain; but it was not so now. Little Bessie did not know what was going on, was drenched with sea-water, and greatly terrified. She could not understand her father, or would not be satisfied.

'It is dada who has you in his arms, Bessie,' he said, with his mouth under his dreadnaught. 'Baby will soon be snug in a warm bed, and have hot milk to drink.'

But she strove fretfully in his arms to beat a way by which she might peer out of the wraps, and broke out into shrill screams of pain and anger.

Richard stood still on the shelf, to readjust her in his arms; perhaps, as he held her, her little back suffered, so he altered her position under his oilskin coat. Her cries went through

his heart and unnerved him, already shaken and exhausted; cold though he was, he felt hot for a moment with distress and perturbation of spirit.

'Bessie, darling! do be still. Trust your dada a few minutes more, and all will be well!'

But hardly had the words escaped him, when the rubble under his feet slid away on the shelfy strata of slate. He fell heavily on his side. He had just presence of mind to fold both his arms round the baby, when he rolled over, and went down the slope and steps of rock. If he were hurt, he felt no pain; his whole attention was engrossed in the child he bore, his whole effort to ward it from blows with his elbows and hands.

In another moment one of the coastguardmen came down to him.

'Bessie is unhurt!' exclaimed Richard, lying among the stones.

'Any harm done?' asked the man. 'Give us a hand. Stand up, mate.'

Cable waited a moment, and moved his elbows, and then said: 'Take her. I cannot rise.'

He had dislocated his thigh.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE 'MAGPIE.'

THERE stood a humble inn—a tavern, rather—called the 'Magpie,' on the downs; its door opened on no high road, but it stood where lanes or side parish roads converged. In the olden days, it had been a resort of smugglers who had run their goods into Pentargon Cove. The taverner had then always maintained half-a-dozen donkeys, and these were employed in transporting the smuggled goods up the cliffs by the precarious path which alone gave access to the cove, and enabled goods brought there to be carried away. The smugglers knew well enough how to surmount the most difficult portion of the ascent: they stretched a rope along it from a crowbar driven into the turf above. As for the donkeys, they were unshod and sure-footed, they would run almost where a squirrel went.

But the smuggling times were past, so were the days when a lively trade in wrecks was

carried on; and the 'Magpie' would have perished of inanition, had not the landlord begun to enclose the downs and annex a farm to his alehouse. The place was so exposed, so wind-swept, that only rye would grow there; but he kept plenty of sheep and several pigs, and reared, though he could not fatten, cattle.

As none of the roads that met at the 'Magpie' were market-roads, the host could only count on stray passengers, fagged with laborious scrambles up the stony and steep coast-road, to drop in for refreshment. His most regular customers were the coastguard, who, in their nocturnal tramps along the cliffs, passed his door twice every night, and never passed without a halt and a drop of comfort.

Partly because the coastguard wished to do Jacob Corye a good turn, and partly because the 'Magpie' was the nearest inn, they conveyed the Cable family beneath its sheltering roof. Richard was put to bed, a surgeon sent for; and Mrs. Cable undressed the children, borrowed dry clothes of the landlady for them, and set to work to wash the salt out of their garments and hang them up to dry.

Scarcely had the Cables been housed, before a swarm of men came down the cliff to the beach, from which the tide was retreating, invaded the 'Bessie,' and began to ransack and

strip her, as the ants will attack and strip a dead bird cast near their mound. Sails, shrouds, anchor, binnacle, the fittings of the cabin, the contents of the galley, the mattresses of the berths, the benches, stools, the chests, everything they could remove was carried away. They heeded neither cold nor wet; they disregarded the peril to their lives from the waves that still swept the wreck, so eager, so ravenous were they for spoil.

The days of the wreckers are long over—that is to say, the days when wrecking was called wrecking; it is now called salving, from the Latin word *salvare*, to save; but this does not imply that those who have been wrecked get much more than if they had fallen into the hands of wreckers. Those whose fathers went wrecking, now go salving; and very consoling it is to us to know that we have made such an advance in civilisation. As a matter of fact, the thing is pretty much the same. All salvage is supposed to be given up to an official Receiver of Wreck—on the coast where the 'Bessie' was cast, this was the head coastguard. But it is by no means certain that all that is salved is thus delivered over. When the Receiver has got what the salvors have chosen to deliver up, then the Board of Trade investigates, and decides between the respective claims

of the owner and the salvor, retaining, however, a share for the Crown. Usually the wreckage is sold by auction first; and it is the proceeds which are divided, the Crown taking a third, and the salvors a third; and a third is left to the owner. To the last-named the salving looks very like wrecking; to Richard Cable, very much so on this occasion; for the things were sold when he was unable to attend, and the amount raised to be divided by three was not much, and his receipt infinitesimal compared with the value he set on his property. Moreover, things he valued highly sold for pence and farthings. Richard was irritated, and not at all in a frame of mind to be comforted by the thought that everything he treasured had gone under the category of salvage, and was therefore clean away from him for ever.

'It is her doing—it all comes of her!' he muttered, and tossed in fever and rage on his bed. He was unreasonable in his anger. The thought of Josephine as one who brought evil on him and pursued him remorselessly, had taken hold of his fancy, and he attributed every misfortune to her; not altogether without a cause, for had she not made Hanford unendurable to him, he would not have left it; had he not left it, he would not have been

wrecked; had he not been wrecked, he would not have been crippled; and had he not been crippled, he would have returned to his ship the moment he saw his children safe, and then no wreckers or salvors could have meddled with its contents.

His very ship was no longer his own; it had passed into the hands of the salvors. Fortunately, all his money was safe; before leaving, he had secured it about him. But the amount was small, after he had paid his rent and all the little bills at Hanford.

Presently, Mrs. Cable came up and took his hand. It was hot, and his cheeks were flushed. 'The surgeon is a long time coming,' she said. 'O Richard, this accident to you is worst of all.'

'That is as it should be,' he answered. 'I threw little Bessie down and injured her; now she has cast me down and lamed me. If in like manner as She at Hanford Hall'—he would not name Josephine—'has brought misery and ruin on me and mine, misery and ruin might befall her, I were well content.'

'Richard,' said Mrs. Cable sorrowfully, 'I do not recognise you, with these bitter feelings in your heart.'

'I do not recognise myself. Do you know how, if a little gall falls into a pot, it spoils the

whole mess? She has spilt wormwood into my life; and the world, everything I taste and smell and see and hear and feel, is bitterness to me.'

The doctor arrived; and with the help of the innkeeper, Richard's leg was got in place again; but the surgeon shook his head, and said that there was more injury than mere displacement done—that the recovery would be slow; the leg must be given perfect rest; and that, unfortunately, it was likely Richard would always have a stiff joint.

'That also,' muttered Cable, clenching his hands in the bed—'that I shall owe to her, and bear ever about, as a lasting record against her, a warning against my ever forgiving her.'

He was restless whilst confined to his bed, and his restlessness interfered with his convalescence. He was impatient to get away, to be at his future home. The pain he suffered made him irritable; but disappointment chafed him more than physical pain. What wrong had he done that he should be thus pursued with misfortune? He had done his utmost for his children; he had discharged his duties as a lightshipman, as a son, as a husband, conscientiously; and yet—Providence laid on his back lash after lash, as if he were one who needed chastisement to be brought out of evil

courses into the right way. He murmured at the ways of Providence; he accused it of injustice, of cruelty, of blindness. He was wroth with the crew for deserting the 'Bessie.' If they were all drowned, it served them right. Had they remained, one could have continued in command of the vessel, and delivered it from becoming a prey to the salvors. He was angry with those who had despoiled his ship, though he knew that they had acted with legal right. He was incensed with his hostess, who had come up to his sickroom and demanded whether he were prepared to pay for all the food and care and housing he and his family received.

'We 're poor folk,' said the woman, 'and can't afford to keep eight people for nothing. The children eat a lot o' bread and butter, and drink a gallon of milk. My man is a hard-working chap; but he don't calculate to maintain a family as ain't his own.'

Richard had promised to pay; but the demand of the woman, though reasonable, appeared selfish and hard to him.

'You know,' said she, 'I've heard that folks be going about with a brief to get together a few shillings, maybe a couple o' sovereigns or even more, for you; and when you've got the money, you can pay me out of that.'

Then Richard was very hot with indig-

nation. 'Tell those busybodies who have begun the collection, to return every penny. Not one coin of it will we touch. I am not a beggar. I will take nothing from any one but what I have earned with my hands.'

He knew that his scanty fund would soon be exhausted; but he would not stoop to receive a gift. He was a proud man—he had inherited pride from his mother.

Then he thought of Josephine, always with a simmering rage in his heart. He counted over all the insults she had heaped on him. He recalled her look, the flash of her eye, the distended nostril, the curled lip, the contemptuous shrug of the beautiful shoulders, the intonation of her flexible voice. He could not yet shake off the fascination, the admiration she produced in him; but he thought of her without love. What was she now doing? How had she borne the news of his departure? He knew but too surely. She had laughed, and clapped her hands, and tossed her beautiful head, and said: 'I am well rid of him.' Now she was free, and enjoying herself, going about to all the tennis-parties and picnics and dinners in the neighbourhood, courted, making herself agreeable, saying sharp and witty things, singing and playing, forgetting him utterly, and only now and then, when forced to recall him,

recollecting him with a sneer. As he thus thought, he ground his teeth and tore at the sheet till he had ripped it into rags; and he bit at the rags and tore them smaller and threw them about him, in impotent fury. Verily, he hated Josephine with deadly hate.

Jacob Corye, his host, was a good-natured man, and he came up with his pipe occasionally, and with a jug of ale in one hand, and sat and talked with him; but his talk did not much interest Cable—it was all about bullocks.

'You see, cap'n, this is how we're beat. We can raise just about any amount of young stock here; but we can't fat 'em. There's no rich pasture to make 'em fat; or it may be the salt that is over all the land, carried by the wind and air for a score o' miles inland, takes the goodness and the fatting properties out o' the grass. I can't say; I'm no scholar. But we can raise 'em; we can raise 'em in any numbers. We can raise and rear 'em; but we can't sell 'em to good advantage, all because we can't fat 'em. If, now, we could fat 'em as well as raise and rear 'em, then it's pounds on pounds we could make; but we can't do it. I've turned it over and over in my mind, and I don't see how it can be altered. You may take my word for it, cap'n, rearing is one thing, raising

is another, and fatting is a third. It is just as with milk—there's milking, and creaming, and buttering. Now, we can rear and raise, but we can't fatten; which is all the same as if in a dairy they milked and made cream, but nohow could turn the cream into butter. Consider the loss that would be, if they couldn't make butter out of the cream! Or, put it another way, with wool—there's the shearing, and then the weaving, and then the tailoring, before the coat of a sheep comes on my back. There's a profit goes in the shearing, another in the weaving, and again in the tailoring. Just reckon it up in your mind what a fortunate thing it would be for me if I could shear the wool off my sheep and clap it straight on to your carcase without any intervention of weaver and tailor. It would not be keeping of the "Magpie" I'd be then, and getting a few coppers out of the coastguard of a night, when they're prowling about looking for each other. It do rile me uncommon, thinking how I'm beat about the fatting.'

'I'm not surprised at your house bearing the sign of the "Magpie,"' said Richard impatiently.

'Ain't you?' answered Jacob. 'Well, now, that's a curious coincidence; nor am I. I found it called the "Magpie" when I was born

into it. But—as I was saying about the young cattle.'

'Oh—the cattle.' Richard turned his head irritably from side to side on the pillow. 'I thought you'd fatted 'em off and done with them.'

'On the contrary,' said Jacob eagerly, 'that's just what I can't do. There come the rascally regraders about, and pick up our calves or young stock; and they take 'em to Camelford or Launceston or Bideford, poor and thin, naught but skin and bone, because we can't fatten. If we could fatten as we can rear and raise, we'd get better prices; but we can't. It's like your seven little maids—just as if you could rear 'em and educate 'em, and couldn't marry 'em, because you'd no money to lay on 'em thick as slabs o' yellow fat. There'd be a cruel case, to have the bringing up of all them maidens and not to be able to marry 'em. I say it's all the same with our young stock. The regraders make a profit at the market; and then others take the cattle, and when they've fatted 'em, they sells 'em to the butchers; and they kill 'em, and there's a profit again. There's two profits goes out of my pocket, and I'm beat if I know how to compass it to secure 'em to myself.'

'I want to go to sleep,' growled Richard,

driven desperate by the incessant chatter of the host about raising and rearing and fattening.

'Put it to yourself,' continued the landlord placidly. 'It would be a vexing thing for a father like you to have raised seven little maids —and I will say they're as promising young stock of the human kind as I've seen many a day—and been to pains and expense rearing and educating of 'em; but you never get no farther—never can fatten 'em. You toil and you contrive and pinch yourself every way for 'em; but they remain like Pharaoh's lean kine. You can't do nothing with 'em; no buyer will take 'em off your hands; all your labour and care is so much waste, because you can't fatten. That would be an aggravating sight for a father in his old age to have all these seven as bony, lean old maids browsing about him, because he was unable to dispose of 'em in the marriage market! You can understand that; then you can understand the feelings of a farmer here with his calves. There is nothing like bringing a situation home to a man personally by personal application,' said Jacob sententiously.—'My pipe is out.'

'I'm not surprised,' sneered Richard.—'Hark! what is that? Who is downstairs? I hear a voice I know!'

An exclamation in the doorway from Mrs. Cable: 'Oh, Mr. Sellwood! You here!'

'Come all the way from Hanford on purpose,' was the answer. 'We heard there of the wreck. It was in the papers; and I came to gather information about those who were lost—poor fellows!—for their relations. I thought it would ease their minds. But most of all, I've come to see Richard—I have a message for him.'

'From whom, rector?'

'From his wife—from poor Josephine.'

Poor Josephine? Richard laughed scornfully in his bed.

A brief paragraph in the papers was all that informed Hanford people of the loss of the 'Bessie.' When a ship is wrecked and sailors' or passengers' lives are lost, depositions are taken as to the facts, and the names are entered in an official record; but very little information gets about. When a man-of-war or a passenger vessel sinks, then full lists of those who go down in her are published. When a railway accident occurs, then we know who were killed, who had bones broken, who were bruised, and who had only their hats battered and their shirts crumpled. But when a sailing-vessel, a trader, a collier, a fishing-smack is lost, the

matter is dismissed in a line of the daily paper; there is no sensational writing done about it; no details of the tragedy are given. The loss is too insignificant, too much in the common run of events, to demand much attention. When, in the post-office, a letter goes astray, especially if that letter contains half-a-dozen postage stamps, a great stir is made; the General Post-office sends down an official to investigate the matter, to track the course of these six Queen's-heads, and to bring to justice the postman through whose dishonesty they have been made away with. But when a ship, not an envelope, and six living human heads are lost—not six little paper portraits worth a penny each—then a perfunctory inquiry suffices; no one concerns himself to see whether blame attaches to anyone; scarcely is the trouble taken to count the lost heads and ascertain whether it were half a dozen, or twelve, or a baker's dozen. So, when the scanty tidings of the loss of the 'Bessie' reached Hanford, no one knew the particulars.

In such cases, on the seacoast, the parson is the one who collects the requisite information. He writes to the parson of the parish where the wreck took place, and the latter is almost sure to supply the desired particulars. But if the parson be like Baal, either talking or hunting

or on a journey, or peradventure sleeping, then there is neither voice nor any that answereth, and the trembling, anxious wives and mothers must remain in suspense.

The importance of the tidings of the loss of the 'Bessie' did not strike either Josephine or her father at first, for neither was aware of the change of name; but the rector soon knew, and came to the Hall to break the news to Josephine. He at once volunteered to run down by express to Bideford and take the North Cornwall coach on, and learn all that was needed to be known, and telegraph what he heard to Hanford. Josephine wanted to accompany him, but he dissuaded her from so doing.

Mr. Cornellis brightened at the news. 'Really, Josephine,' he said, 'luck is on your side.'

She did not answer him, but went into the garden after the rector, caught his arm, and said: 'Tell him—tell him, if he be alive, that I send him my humble love. He has only to hold up his finger, and I will come to him. Tell him all—he must now know all.'

'Say nothing to your father about your resolution till my return.'

Thus it came about that the good, kind old man arrived at the 'Magpie.'

On his way from Bideford he had occupied the box-seat, and the coachman had been able to tell him about the wreck. The crew were all lost—how many they were, he did not know; but the captain and a woman, his mother, and six or seven little children, were saved, and were all at the 'Magpie.' 'And looky' here, sir,' said the driver; 'whatever you do, don't drink none of Jacob Corye's beer; it's bad. I reckon it be brewed with Epsom salts. I took a couple o' glasses once, and I couldn't drive the coach next day, I were that pulled down. None of the quality, sir, patronises the "Magpie," only them coastguard—a low lot, sir; and Jacob's beer and Epsom salts agrees wi' them, happen.' He drew his lash across the leader.—'You don't happen to know Jacob, sir?'

'I have not had the honour.'

'You'll please to mind what I have said about his beer, sir. Jacob is always going on upon his young stock because he can't fatten. He begrudges the money picked up by they who take them off him and put them in rich pastures for a few weeks and then sell them at a great profit. It is all very well for Jacob to grumble that way; but it is my belief that he drenches his bullocks with his beer. I'd be glad to know what becomes of his beer, if he

don't give it to the cattle. No Christian—only coastguards—will drink it; and you can't fatten young stock on Epsom salts. I put it to you, sir, as a man of the world and a Church of England minister—can you?' Again he wiped the back of his leader, as tenderly as a fly-fisher wiping the glassy surface of a pool for a trout. 'Looky' here, sir! Them coastguard men took the cap'n of the wreck to the "Magpie" because they drinks there, what no one else in his senses would do, not if he has any respect for his vitals. It do seem a cruel pity that the party there should run the risk of being poisoned, just to oblige the coastguard and Jacob Corye.—You're going to see the cap'n you say, sir. Well, I think—you'll excuse the freedom I take—that you'd be acting as a true minister of religion if you'd caution the cap'n against the "Magpie" beer. It's that lowering, sir, that you, sir, whom I take to be an archdeacon——'

'O dear, no!—nothing of the sort—a simple rector.'

'Even if you was an archdeacon, sir, after a week of that "Magpie" beer you would be a-teetotaling all over the county.'

When Mr. Sellwood descended from the coach, he tipped the driver so generously, that the coachman drew close to him with

a radiant smile and said, behind his hand: 'You'll not touch a drop o' that beer, sir; and say a word in season to the cap'n.' As he strolled away towards the tap of the inn where the coach stopped for the night, he said to himself: 'If he was to take half-a-dozen glasses of that beer, it would so lower him altogether, that, for the return journey, he'd give me a sixpence instead o' half-a-crown. A man can't come to greater degradation than that, I reckon.'

Forewarned in this way, the rector of Hanford, after having deposited his portmanteau at the inn where the coach stopped, walked off to the 'Magpie.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

'MAGPIE' BEER.

WHEN the rector appeared at the 'Magpie' Mrs. Cable was pleased to see his genial face, but uncertain how her son would take his visit. She had no doubt that the message of which he spoke was one that would irritate him. In all probability, Josephine asked his pardon; but he was in no humour to grant it. Bessie Cable had ceased to speak to him about his wife. Any allusion to her, however slight, roused his anger; and the only way in which she could keep him quiet was to talk of future plans, or of what the children were doing—how they picked mushrooms on the downs and blackberries in the hedges.

She put her finger to her lips when the rector blurted out his purpose in coming, and beckoned to him to come in with her to the parlour. Then, when he had complied, she asked him to be seated, and standing herself respectfully, told him, with a distressed face

and with the tears trembling in her eyes, how matters stood.

The rector listened to her, interrupting every now and then, because he could not keep his tongue quiet; and when she had done, he began to talk. He told her that her whole past history was known to him; and that in his opinion the time had arrived when Richard must be told who was his father, and what the wrong was that had been done to his mother. 'Leave it to me,' said Mr. Sellwood; 'I will tell Richard; but when I stamp on the floor thrice, you must come up; I shall want you.'

'Please, sir, say as little to him as you can about his wife. It has become a craze with him that she is the occasion of every misfortune and trouble that has come upon him. He is an altered man—altered for the worse. I scarce know my gentle, loving Dick any more. I do even believe he has left off saying his prayers.'

'Let me alone,' said Mr. Sellwood. 'I have mixed with all kinds of men and seen all sorts of humours, and I will deal with him discreetly. Now, I will go up, or he will be suspecting that you have been priming me.'

'Will you take anything, sir, after your long journey? Shall I order you—some beer?'

'Beer!' exclaimed Mr. Sellwood. 'On no account.' He dashed up the stairs. '"Magpie" beer—and in a week be lowered to teetotalise the county!'

'How are you?' exclaimed the rector, bursting into the room occupied by Richard. The stairs were very steep, almost like a ladder. He had gone up them fast, and precipitated himself against the frail door, that flew open before his weight. He came in like a blast of healthy cool wind, that drives fogs and miasma away. His hearty red face, his cheery spirits, his crisp manner, had a momentarily salubrious effect on the sick man, whose brain was clouded with the fever-fogs that rose from his festering heart. He put out his hand, and the rector shook it.

The rector was one of those men who carry with them wherever they go a sense of substantiality. Men in an uncertain position, pecuniary or social, have ever a crack in them. They cannot help it—it is inevitable. But the rector was a gentleman by birth, a man of private means, an incumbent in an established church, of hereditary orthodoxy, who no more changed his opinions than he changed his banker; who no more dreamed of insecurity in his position than he dreamed of giving up the 'Guardian' or of going through a course of

Zola. A man with an uncertain position is a man with a very thin skin, and he is always supposing that he is being tickled, or pinched, or impinged upon by those about him, wilfully, and he resents these touches as personal affronts. But a man who has been a gentleman since he fed out of a silver spoon as a baby, and who has never overdrawn his account at the bank; who, like certain Alpine plants, knows perfectly his own level, and that he will get frozen if he creeps above it, or stifled if he descends beneath it, is confident, thick-skinned, never imagines and resents a slight. He pities the unfortunates who do not appreciate his worth, and would help them freely out of his purse, however grossly they might have insulted him, should they need assistance. Such a man is a rhinoceros as to hide; not arrows or spears, only conical rifle bullets, pierce his skin. But the triple-hided rhinoceros is the gentleman incumbent in an established church, who knows that his tithes must be paid, and that nothing short of a revolutionary explosion can shake the establishment. Such a man imposes by his presence, by his confidence in himself; and when the rector burst into Richard's room, Richard, who was disposed to be angry at having been pursued from the east to the west by one of Hanford, was unable to look surly

and turn his face to the wall and keep his hand in bed.

'Parson Sellwood,' said Richard Cable, 'I won't say that I'm not glad to see you; but if you come with a message to me, I must ask you not to deliver it. I can have no more communication with one who has hurt me past the power of forgiveness. I don't want ever to hear her name again. I wish I may never see her face. I curse the day that we met. She came to me in storm, and I put out my arms and took her into my vessel. And in return she has pursued me till she has thrown me and my little ones out of our house, our home, cast us up, shipwrecked waifs, on a strange shore, and me flung out with an injury that will never be got over. That she has hurt my body, matters little—I could have forgiven that; but she has crushed and crippled also my child. Little Bessie and I are both wrecks; my home is wrecked, my happiness is wrecked, my faith is wrecked—and she has done it—she alone!' He turned his head away.

'Cable, my good fellow,' said the rector, taking a chair and seating himself in it a little way from the bed, where he could watch Richard, 'the message I bring you must be told.'

'I will not hear it.'

'The person who gave it me urged it on me before we parted.'

'Take it back to her unuttered. I throw it in her face.'

'I beg your pardon. The person is not a she.'

'What!—the message is not from my—from her?'

Mr. Sellwood evaded a direct answer. 'As I came along on the coach, I had a most earnest message imparted to me to convey to you.'

'She has come! She is here! She is below!' almost screamed Cable. 'Let her not come near me, or touch one of my children!'

'The coachman was very particular that I should remember to advise you on no account to touch the "Magpie" beer. It is made with Epsom salts.'

Richard turned his head sharply round and stared at the rector.

Mr. Sellwood maintained a face of the utmost gravity. 'Poor fellow,' he continued. 'It has disagreed with him; and having a warm heart, he pities you, and repeatedly sent this message to you by me: 'Don't drink any "Magpie" beer.'

Richard drew a long breath. This was all, was it?

'The "Magpie" beer,' proceeded the rector,

throwing one leg over the other and folding his hands and twirling his thumbs, 'is reported to be lowering; and my good friend the coachman believed that no one but a coastguardman could drink it long without becoming a teetotaler.'

Richard still stared at his visitor.

'The "Magpie" beer,' said the imperturbable rector, 'is held to be the real cause why Jacob Corye cannot fatten his young stock. Has he said anything to you about his calves and bullocks that he raises——'

'And rears,' interjected Richard, and sank flat on the bed. 'Too much. In mercy—I have had enough of that. I did not expect this from you, sir. My head turns. I pray you, none of this seesaw about raising and rearing and fattening.'

'You wish me to change the topic?'

'By all means, sir, or I shall go mad. That Jacob Corye comes in here with his pipe and his jug of beer——'

'Never touch it,' interrupted the rector.

'And talks of naught else but the raising and rearing and the fattening of young stock, till, in spite of my thigh, I think I must jump out of bed and run away.'

'Is it a fact that he feeds his young stock on beer?'

'I don't believe a word of it, sir.'

'Or that there is Epsom salts in his beer?'

'I've not tried it; I can't say.'

'When I heard of the properties of that beer—I was so troubled in mind at the danger you ran, that I came at once to see, to bring you the message and warn you of your danger.'

Richard raised himself in the bed slightly. 'Sir,' he said, 'I do not understand. You did not come all the way from Hanford to caution me against the "Magpie" beer—did you?'

'No. I cannot say that. The coachman spoke to me about it; but—as you ask *what* the real motive of my journey was, I do not object to tell you.'

Then Richard became agitated. 'I heard you speak down stairs. You have a message to me from—from *her*. I will not receive it.'

'You need not,' answered the rector with placidity. 'But it does my heart good to hear you have not touched the "Magpie" beer. I have come here to talk to you about your father.'

'My father!' Again Richard stared at his visitor.

'You ran away from Hanford in such a hurry,' continued the rector, 'that those who desired to communicate with you after your father's death——'

'My father is dead!'

'And were at liberty to do so,' proceeded Mr. Sellwood, 'had not the opportunity. I may tell you candidly that I have only recently learned the circumstances of your parentage—only since your abrupt departure. In the matter of his estate, which you may justly claim——'

'He was rich!—left money!' gasped Richard.

'Excuse me, Cable, but you are rather given to interrupt. When you turn a tap, a stream flows out; but if you put your finger in the way, an even flow is diverted into spirts and splashes. If you will allow me to tell the story in my own quiet way, without breaks, it will be more consequent, and easier for me to tell and you to follow.' Then he stamped thrice on the floor; and immediately Mrs. Cable came up. 'I desire you to be present,' said Mr. Sellwood, 'whilst I tell Richard your story, and concerning his own father, that you may confirm me when I am right and correct me when wrong.'

Richard looked uneasily at his mother. 'I do not wish to hear the story,' he said bluntly.

The rector understood him, and looking him steadily in the eye, said, 'It is a story which, though it tells of wrong done to your

mother, tells of nothing but what makes for her honour. She is a woman'—he rose and bowed to Bessie—'I could almost envy you to be able to call her your mother—a woman I always respected, one whom now I revere.' Then he sat down again.

Cable was touched, softened; he put out his hand to his mother and clasped hers. Their eyes met. The little cloud of doubt which had always hung on his mind was gone. His mother was irreproachable. He had felt it must be so, and yet he was not sure. Then he turned to the rector and said: 'Thank you sir—thank you for that.'

'Now, Cable, you must listen to me patiently and without interruption—I hate interruptions—whilst I tell you the entire truth.'

Then he told Richard what he knew. It was the merest outline of a life-story, which Bessie could have filled in with a thousand particulars, but which were now unnecessary. Mr. Sellwood told the story with delicacy, avoiding the slightest reproach on the memory of the dead man, casting the blame on his relations, perhaps exaggerating the pressure that was brought upon him to induce him to consent to the annulling of the marriage.

As Richard listened, his eyes were fixed on his mother, and his thought throughout was,

what she had endured, and with what silent dignity she had borne her wrong.

'And now, Cable,' continued the rector—'now I come to speak about Josephine.'

Instantly, at the sound of her name the man's face altered. He let go his mother's hand, and gathered up the sheet about his ears and shouted: 'I will not hear about her; I will receive no message from her. I would to God I could forget her!'

'Do not act like a child, Cable,' remonstrated Mr. Sellwood. 'I must speak——'

'But I will not listen,' retorted the maimed man.

The rector looked at Bessie, and she at him. What was to be done?

Just then, up the stair came the host with a jug of beer in his hand. 'Well, I never!' exclaimed Jacob Corye. 'A parson in the "Magpie!" This is the first time this has happened. Well, sure, this is an honour; and, sir—if I may make so bold—you'll drink the "Magpie" beer, and no better was ever brewed, to the good-luck of the house; and to the mending of the cap'n, you shall drink a second, and no charge for either.'

'My good friend——' protested the rector, backing.

'Nay; I'll take no refusal,' insisted Jacob.

'My beer is famous, and you shan't have to pay for it. First time a parson has come over my drexil [threshold] and stood between my derns [jambs]. Drink, sir!—Nay, parson! Drain it to the bottom, to the good-luck o' the "Magpie;" and I'll fill it again to the mending of the cap'n's thigh. Now, sir!—Nay, drink away, to the last drop; there's more coming. —Now, sir, what do you say to 'Magpie" beer?'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

YET.

Mr. Sellwood walked back to his inn, carrying within him two jugs of 'Magpie' beer, and the equally salt and sour conviction that he had failed with Richard. He had not been able to convey to him Josephine's message; he had not been able to tell him of her resolution to make over Gotham's property to him. Cable was in that touchy and obstinate state of mind that he refused to allow the smallest reference to his wife.

How the characteristics of the mother came out in the son under similar provocation! As, under the influence of pleasure or pain, of strong passion, of death-faint, likenesses never before noted appear on a face, so is it with mental and spiritual characteristics. Long years may pass without any resemblances having been traced, and then, all at once, the son, under exciting conditions or numbing sorrow,

reproduces the modes of thought, follows the lines of his parents' conduct in similar situations. Bessie Cable had been silent for many years, burying her grievance in her heart, brooding over it, showing it to none; and now, her son, staggering under a blow, fell into the same course, and doggedly refused to allow her who had struck him to be mentioned in his presence.

The rector was a sanguine man. He buoyed himself in the confidence that everything would come right in the end; but he was forced to admit to himself that this end was a long way off in the case of Cable and Josephine. Those qualities in the man which had made him estimable before—his steadiness of purpose, his reserve, his self-respect, his patience in the midst of difficulties—combined now to impede a reconciliation. He had taken his resolution, and would adhere to it with iron tenacity. He would confide his wrongs to no one; take counsel from no one, be swayed by no one. His galled dignity would harden into stubborn pride; his patience would make him endure every extremity without a murmur, rather than yield. Mr. Sellwood saw that the task he had set before himself, and which had presented itself to him at first as easy, was one beyond his powers of performing. He went in a medi-

tative mood to the telegraph office, and sent a communication to his wife at Hanford concerning those who had been lost in the wreck; but he sent none to Josephine. He did not know how to couch his message in a few words. He walked home to the inn and called for a drop of brandy, to correct the influences of the 'Magpie' beer, and looked about for writing materials. He would send Josephine a letter. He speedily disposed of the brandy; but the letter was not so easily managed. What was he to say? That the Cables were safe, but that Richard had injured his thigh; that they had lost everything except a small sum of money that Richard had carried on his person, and which, therefore, had not fallen into the hands of the salvors. He might write this, but it would have the effect of bringing the impetuous Josephine there; he was sure of that; and the result would be to aggravate the estrangement. He had his pen in his mouth, biting the end of the quill and ripping the feathers off it with his teeth, with a puzzled and distressed look on his honest face, when the waiter opened the door and said that Mrs. Cable wished to speak with him.

'Show her in,' said the rector, drawing a sigh of relief. Perhaps she could help him out of his difficulty: anyhow, her interview with

him would delay the execution of his embarrassing task.

'Sit down, Mrs. Cable—sit down. Just wired to Mrs. Sellwood about the poor fellows. She will go round and see their families and break the news to them. She is a wonderful woman—wonderful in these painful cases—has such tact; I do not know what I should do without her. Sit down, do. I've '—apologetically—'been taking just a drop, only a drop of brandy, neat; did not feel quite myself within. Had a good deal to upset me of late.' He pointed with the end of his pen at the little bottle and glass. A long curl of ripped feather hung from the quill. He had pulled it off with his teeth, in his perplexity, as if the solution to his difficulty was to be found under the outer cortical, as a woodpecker seeks its food under bark and moss on tree-boughs.

'I have been writing—that is, I have begun a letter. No. Upon my word, I have only begun to think about beginning one, and have got no further into it than "My dear Josephine." If it were a sermon I should have got on famously by this time; but—I am pulled up at the very outstart. I can't get on. I hope you have brought me something satisfactory, which I can say.'

Mrs. Cable's handsome face was troubled.

I suppose, sir, I did wrong, harbouring my resentment against Gabriel for so many, many years; and now the chastisement has come on me. Richard said that as he had maimed little Bessie, she had maimed him, and that this is a law. As I was unforgiving, so now is my son unforgiving. I was hardened for more years than I like to say, and I doubt if he will yield sooner. I am a woman, with a woman's weakness; and he a man, with a man's strength.'

'But then,' resumed the rector, 'it makes all the difference that your resentment was against a man, and his is against a weak girl.'

Bessie shook her head. 'Gabriel, heaven knows, was weak enough.'

'He never sought to make amends to you. Josephine is full of self-reproach, and is thoroughly in earnest in her desire for reconciliation.'

'It cannot be,' said Mrs. Cable, after a moment's consideration. 'If he forgave her to-day, they would be apart again to-morrow. They have nothing in common; with the best wishes to be happy together, they could not unite. There's a way of the weft and a way of the woof in everything—in human natures, as in brown holland or silk velvet. If you join two pieces of the same material with the weft of one across the woof of the

other, there'll be puckers for ever. You may wash and pull and iron to get them smooth; but you wash into fresh puckers, and you pull apart and iron into creases. I leave you to judge how it must be when you stitch together sailcloth and satin across each other's grain.'

'What am I to say?' asked the rector despairingly. 'I must write to Josephine. She is in great trouble As for your theory, I don't hold it. There is give and take in all married life. Bless me! do you think Mrs. Sellwood and I agreed together from the first like bread and butter? Cable and Josephine have not been together three months, and are they to fly apart at the first tiff!'

'There is give and take where the joining is between two cut the same way, weft *or* woof. Then when one pulls, the other gives.'

'Mrs. Sellwood and I had our tiffs. Why —I remember distinctly the second week of our marriage, she—that is, I—— Well, never mind particulars; we were both in the wrong. It was a rainy day, and horribly cold, at Mürren, several thousand feet above the sea, and in close proximity to glaciers. Nothing to do; no books but odd volumes of Tauchnitz; no heating apparatus in our room. I wrapped myself up in a *duvet* and stood at one window looking out into the rain; and she wrapped

herself up in a *duvet* and looked out at the rain from another window; and we would not speak to each other. We were both cold, both cross, and both in the wrong, and ashamed, or too proud to own it. I thought then I had made a mistake in marrying her, and I believe a very similar idea lodged in her head. It was wet and clammy and cold in our room, that detestable day at the Hôtel du Silberhorn at Mürren. I know that I used my pocket-handkerchief, and so did she. We were all right again next day, when the sun shone. I got up early and picked her a bunch of Edelweiss and gentians; and she—she mended one of my braces for me which I had broken out. We made it up then—I have no patience with Cable; he must come round. Why, he can't be in a more miserably uncomfortable condition than I was that morning at Mürren, scrambling about after Alpine flowers—wearing one suspender!'

Bessie shook her head. The cases were hardly analogous.

'Josephine is humbled,' he went on. 'There is infinite good in the dear girl; but she has been mismanaged—I will not say by whom. She has—she always has had a true and sound heart; but she has been allowed her own way too much, and permitted to ex-

ercise her temper without check. She is headstrong, because she has been almost forced by circumstances to decide on her own course for herself; but she is a true woman—a true woman,' repeated the old rector, standing up. 'I'm the last to conceal, to deny her faults; but—there is sterling stuff in her. She's a dear girl, a good girl.' He walked to the window and looked out. Presently he came back to the table. 'Look here, Mrs. Cable. Do you suppose that I have not had crows to pluck with Josephine? I do not mind confiding to you—but let it go no further—that I have had a crow as big as an albatross and as black as pitch to pluck with her. She hurt me where I am most sensitive to pain. Are you aware that my boy proposed to her, and that she refused him—threw him over for your Richard? A father has feelings. He is proud of his son, when that son is good and has not cost him an hour of uneasiness; and a father turns somewhat rusty against a young hussy who snaps her fingers in his face. But I forgive her. Indeed, I may say that I value her infinitely higher now than I did before.—Do you know those horrible little pieces of money one gets in Austria—ten and twenty kreutzer bits, of base metal washed over with silver? They look very well when new; but with use, the silver

rapidly rubs off, and you get the tarnished brass beneath. A lot of women are like that; and the rub and turn about, the daily friction of married life, brushes away all the external gloss and plate. With Josephine, it is just the reverse—the brass is the outer work, and the sterling silver below. Why, is Cable to be angry and cast her away because of the brass? Let him take her and try her, and he will soon come on the precious metal.' He rang the bell. 'Excuse me; I must have another glass of cognac. That "Magpie" beer—two pints was too much. I shall be quite upset.—But, Mrs. Cable, I leave it to you to reason with your son. He rolls himself up like a hedgehog when I come near and breathe a word about Josephine. He does not know what a treasure he has got in her. Tell him that I envy him his possession. I should be glad if my son had her instead.—Bless my soul! does he want his wife to be a turnip or a mangold? I suppose you never heard of Rübezahl, the mountain spirit, did you?, who carried off a princess, and to supply her with companions and ladies-in-waiting, transformed turnips into young damsels. Let me tell you, and tell Cable through you, that the manufacture continues at a brisk rate. I have met scores of young ladies who I could swear were nothing

but transformed turnips. Josephine is not one of these; she has character—she is a real woman.—I am warm—it is not the brandy, it is my feelings which heat me.'

'You see, sir, the difficulty is that both of them are strong-willed in their own ways.'

'But Josephine is bent now on doing what is right.—Judge for yourself, Mrs. Cable, When she learned who Richard really was, at once, without consulting me or Mrs. Sellwood or anyone, she made up her mind that she had no right to Mr. Gotham's property. She would not have Richard enriched through her, but be herself enriched through him. She makes over everything absolutely to him. Is not that a proof of determination and of right principle?'

'In the first place,' answered Mrs. Cable, 'let me say that I am quite sure Richard will not accept the property. I would not myself touch a penny of it; and he shares my pride. If his father did not choose to acknowledge him, Richard will accept nothing of what he has left. I am as sure of that as if I heard Richard say so.'

'But—will not Josephine's disinterestedness touch him? He must see how right-minded she is.'

Bessie shook her head. 'Mr. Sellwood,' she said, after thinking deeply for a few

minutes, 'I allow she must be strong to decide to do this. But strength in her will never touch Richard and bring him to take her in his arms again. It is weakness, and not strength, that appeals to him. He is a man with the heart of a mother. You do not understand. A mother will let herself be cut to pieces rather than that the feeblest child she bears should be hurt. The feebler the child, the more she loves it—the more she will endure for it. The more the child frets and cries, the greater her devotion to it. There are men with mothers' hearts, men who may admire what is strong, but are touched, and who love only what is weak.' She shook her head again. 'No; only in weakness can Josephine recover him. When Gabriel Gotham was rich and at his ease, I nursed my pride and my resentment; but when he was dying with no one that loved him by, no one even to care for him, to stay his head and wipe the sweat from his brow—then I could not hold out any longer; all my pride went down like a tent when the pole gives way. I know Richard, and I see my own nature in him. He is purposeful, and will not be turned when he has set his head in one direction.'

'At all events,' said Mr. Sellwood, 'you will let him know what Josephine has done.

Impress on him that she has made over everything to him. Whether he chooses to take it or not, all that Mr. Gotham bequeathed to her is now your son's. If he refuses to take it—it accumulates for his children. Josephine only delays to hear what I have to tell her about Richard Cable, before executing the requisite deeds. Tell your son that he must appoint some one as his agent, to look after the estate, and care-keepers to take charge of the house, for Josephine will vacate the Hall and leave Hanford.'

Mrs. Cable remained thinking, with composed face and a stern look, usual with her, on her brow. 'I will tell him the main matter,' she said after a long consideration; 'but all the particulars you must tell him to-morrow. I will go to him now and prepare him. You come, sir, if you will be so good, in the morning and see him.' She rose in her dignified manner, made an old-fashioned courtesy and left the room.

When she had gone, the rector put his hands under his coat-tails and walked about the room. 'After having been bitten by a mad-dog,' he said to himself, 'the best thing to do is to run or walk till one drops, so as to work off the poison from the veins. I'll do the same with that "Magpie" ale. I feel it in me still.

I'll go out. And, by the way, I'll see if there be any toyshops in the place where I can get some twopenny trifles to amuse the little Cables to-morrow.'

On reaching the 'Magpie,' Bessie Cable went directly to her son's room and discharged the obligation she had taken on herself. She told what she had to say plainly without comment, confining herself to the bare narration.

Richard listened without interrupting her. His face had acquired some of the sternness which hers had gathered during years of trouble and self-compression. It was now very stern. When she had done, he spoke in reply with a firm voice: 'Mother, I will have none of my father's possessions, because he never called me son. It is indifferent to me what She may decide, how She may dispose of them. Neither she nor his possessions concerns me.'

Mrs. Cable breathed freely. Her son thought in the matter of the Hanford estate like herself. She had felt convinced he would so think; but it was a satisfaction to her to hear him so express himself.

After a short pause, he went on: 'Mother, I will not stay another day here. Whilst you have been absent, I have called up Jacob Corye, and I have told him that we would all leave to-morrow.'

'It is impossible.'

'We all leave to-morrow for St. Kerian. I will not stay here. The parson has followed and found us, and She will be coming next. I know she will. She only waits to hear that he has seen us, that she may come and see us also.'

'She is very sorry, thoroughly repentant. She sends you her humble love.'

'I refuse her love, as I refuse the Hanford estate. I will not see her again. I cannot forgive her. I will not forgive her. I should hate her as much if she came kneeling to me as if she came scoffing at me. She is false and cruel. I always thought that was a queer passage in Scripture about the unpardonable sin. I can understand it now. She has sinned the sin unto death against me, and I will never forgive her in this world or the next.' His eyes began to flame with wrath again; the mention of Josephine was like the poking of the fire in a forge—it made the glare and heat break forth in spurts and sparks.

'Richard,' said his mother, 'you cannot go to-morrow.'

'Go, I will,' he said, moving impatiently in his bed. 'I have ordered Jacob Corye to get me a waggon with trusses of straw; and I will lie on them, and the children can sit about me and in the corners. I shall go mad if I stay

here, thinking every moment that I hear her hand on the door, her foot on the stair, and that next moment I should see her come into my room. If she came—lame though I be, I would leap out of the window to escape her.'

'Richard!'

'I cannot stay here. I must go to St. Kerian to the house that belongs to us. That at least will be my own home; there I can be master, and shut the door in her face, if she dares to pursue me thither. Here I am in an inn, and an inn-door is open to every one.'

'Richard,' said Bessie Cable gravely, 'are you afraid of her?'

He did not answer for a moment, but at last he said: 'I always was afraid of her, from the moment I saw her when we were cast on the sandbank.'

'No, Richard,' said Mrs. Cable suddenly, 'it is not true. You are not afraid of her. You are afraid of your own self. You love her still, as much as ever; and I say—she will conquer you—*yet*. I cannot see into the future; God knows how. Perhaps, as your father conquered me, through weakness; but the time will come, as it came to me. She will conquer you, in spite of all you set up between you, all your turning away, all your anger and resentment; she will conquer you—*yet*.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DIVER.

'My dear Josephine,' said Mrs. Sellwood, 'I can't quite follow you. Why should you not become a governess, if you really are bent on earning your livelihood? I cannot endure the thought of you taking a menial position.'

'Is not that of a governess menial?'

'Hardly so. At least, a lady can maintain her position as a governess; but when she becomes'—she hesitated—'something else, I mean something lower, it makes all the difference in the world.'

'But, dear Mrs. Sellwood, I want to step down into that inferior class, to be able to see with their eyes, hear with their ears, think with their brains, and throb with their passions.'

'It is quite unnecessary,' said Mrs. Sellwood. 'I can do that. You can do it without any quixotism. With them, it is as with all satellites—they reflect the light of their sun; that is, of the social sun, the lady of the house,

or the gentleman, round whom they move. The butler always assimilates himself to the manners and modes of thought and expression of his master; and the lady's maid to those of her mistress. Of course, they never reach their glory; they are, so to speak, pitched in a lower key. They repeat their superiors in an inferior sphere. It is like the echo to the human voice. The same words repeated, but a tone or a semitone, and broken—reflected back. I have known butlers who really might have been mistaken for gentlemen, and ladies'-maids with really very pretty manners.'

Josephine shook her head meditatively. 'Don't you think, Mrs. Sellwood, that the similarity may be external only? I have heard parrots speak like Christians; indeed, I have been told by my father of one which said: "No primogeniture! Down with the House of Lords! Tichborne for ever!" But it had a parrot's mind, for all that'

'Well,' said the rector's wife, 'more than half the people in the world have parrotical minds, if I may so express myself; they merely repeat what they hear, without attaching sense to the words. It is exceptional to find a person who thinks as well as speaks. Servants are nothing but human parrots; they repeat more than the words; they repeat the ideas, pre-

judices, manners, even voices of their superiors, in an exaggerated and somewhat grotesque form. Why, half the words they use they do not understand; I mean those of Latin and Greek origin—perambulator, affidavit, telegraph, bicycle, and so on.'

'They understand what these words mean, but not their derivation.'

'We know both. The words convey more to our minds than to theirs. Surely you can imagine yourself ten degrees stupider than you are, and you at once descend to the menial mind.'

Josephine was still unsatisfied. 'I do not know that,' she objected. 'I fancy we who are cultured can no more understand the mind of the uneducated, than a man can follow the thread of ideas that traverses the brain of a horse.'

'They have no threads of ideas—only thread-ends which they pick up from us. We, who are educated, have our ideas and our reason; and we work out problems, and we throw down our thread-ends and conclusions; and the uneducated take them up and tangle them together into a ball in their brains.'

'I do not believe it, Mrs. Sellwood,' said Josephine. 'Have you ever seen those mats

and rugs made by cottagers out of bits of coloured cloth and list? They weave them into some kind of pattern, but the main fabric of the mat is strong hempen twine. This twine is made into loops, and the fag-ends of coloured cloth are slipped through the loops and gripped and drawn together. These mats have wonderful wear in them, because of the strength and tenacity of the hempen substructure. I quite allow that the lower order of men have not broadcloth minds, have minds made up, as you say, of scraps of culture cast aside by their superiors; but they do weave them into some sort of pattern, and make them into serviceable textures. What I want to learn is, what is the substructure of hemp, what is the grasping, assimilating, organising faculty in the minds of the uneducated? I can never find that out without going among them.'

'You will not find it out if you do go among them; there is no such substructure as you imagine.'

'But, Mrs. Sellwood, how do you know? How can you know, never having been inside the circle of the uneducated?'

'I can judge by what I see,' answered the old lady touchily. 'You are like those Australian explorers who went into the heart of the island expecting to find mountains and lakes,

pastures, gold mines, and nearly perished in the infinite monotony of desert they traversed.'

'I am not going to make any discoveries; I do not anticipate finding a land flowing with milk and honey, or hope to induce colonists from the upper classes to come down and camp in it. I go because my husband belongs to that rough and stony land, and I wish to inhabit it with him, to share his privations and pleasures.'

The rector's wife said nothing. She was doing some woolwork, a group—Ruth and Boaz.

'Mrs. Sellwood,' said Josephine, 'I am not sure that I shall not find an agreeable freedom from formality in the life below the line. Are we not all, who are above it, set to work our lives out like that piece of wool embroidery on which you are engaged? We have to make our stitches exactly according to pattern, and put in exactly the regulated number, and the proper tints. The result is extremely unsatisfactory when the miserable piece of work is done.—Do look at Boaz! His eyes are square; and Ruth's face in profile has a nose resembling a flight of steps. Because the social pattern set before us requires us to make square eyes and staircase noses, are we to do so servilely in defiance of all the canons of art and truth?'

'The nature of the woolwork stitch will not allow of any other arrangement. Allowance is made for the exigencies of canvas.'

'But why should we go on making steppy noses and square lustreless eyes, because the canvas and stitch require it? When you have done your Boaz and Ruth, what is it? It is not a picture—it is a caricature.'

'It is a banner-screen, and will shelter many a face from the fire, and perhaps recall me to the thoughts of my grandchildren, when I am dead and turned to dust.'

'You have run off with the illustration away from what we were discussing, and which this embroidery was meant only to illustrate.'

'I know perfectly what you mean, and I am thinking of that. Suppose our lives are formal, worked out patiently in little squares; first a stitch from right to left, and then another from left to right; now with wool of one tint, then with wool of another—well, it makes a complete whole. There is system in it; there is forethought. It is a work of great patience and perseverance, and it will always tell that tale to generations to come. But the lives you speak of are not so systematised; they are like the needlework of one colour-blind—a jumble, with no idea in the worker's mind how to make a stitch, how to keep in line, to strain his wool,

to match his shades. When, however, the untaught and undisciplined comes into service, is brought into contact with the highly civilised and educated and disciplined, then he or she begins—involuntarily, may be—to copy what is seen; just as the barbarians who invaded the Empire copied the civilisation of Rome. The menial begins at once to sort the wools and to practise stitches; and the result is a copy—sometimes a copy in ill-matched colours, and with irregular lines—of the work of the master or mistress. As far as it is a copy, it is interesting. Where it is not—it is void of everything attractive; it repels.'

'I am not convinced,' said Josephine. 'I will tell you whether I am wrong and you right, after I have made the experiment.—Mrs. Sellwood, have you ever read "The Devil on Two Sticks?"'

'Good gracious, no! It is not proper for one to read.'

'There is no harm in it. Asmodeus takes the student through the air over Madrid, and removes the roofs of all the houses, so that he can see what goes on within: the story of life in every house, in every room, is revealed to him. Do you know I often think of that when I am with people? I consider what mysteries, what romances, what workings are within these

little chambers, with the two eyes as windows; and I long infinitely for a devil to remove the scalp and let me see what is within. Neither you nor I, nor any member of our order, knows in the least what is going on in the great city of the commonalty below us. We want to have the roofs lifted, that we may look in and see the stirring in the brains, and then only shall we understand the thoughts and prejudices, the beliefs, the doubts, and the poetry of Demos.'

'And the commonplace,' added Mrs. Sellwood.

'I will tell you all, when I have seen,' exclaimed Josephine vehemently.—'Dear Mrs. Sellwood, I have been brought in contact with one—the best of men—belonging to that city of mystery. He could not understand me, and I could not understand him. It was as if I belonged to the flying island Laputa, and he to the country of the Houyhnhnms.'

'My dear, you are referring to "Gulliver's Travels."'

'Of course, Mrs. Sellwood.'

'But—ladies never read further than the voyage to Lilliput.'

'I believe they are supposed to limit themselves to the infinitely little.'

Neither spoke for a few moments after this.

Mrs. Sellwood was offended. She, as well as her husband, allowed, and always had allowed, Josephine to speak freely before them. They knew, or suspected, that the influences at home were unsatisfactory; and they had encouraged frankness in her, that they might get to understand her mind, and be able to give some direction to her thoughts, and exercise some check on her inconsiderate impulses. But in permitting this freedom, they had to endure the sharpness of her tongue, which sometimes cut the old people unpleasantly, drawn athwart old prejudices and traditional principles.

'Did you ever read Schiller's "Diver," Mrs. Sellwood?' asked Josephine.

'Yes, dear—long ago. I do not remember much about it, except that a king threw a goblet of gold into Charybdis, and sent down a page after it.'

'Exactly. And the page, when he came up, was to tell the Sicilian king what he had seen in the depths of the sea. This is what he related:

Now the purple darkness of the deep
Lay under my feet like a precipice,
And though here the ear must in deafness sleep,
The eye could look down the sheer abyss,
And see how the depths of these waters dark
Are alive with the dragon, the snake, and the shark.

I am quoting an English version of the poem,

Mrs. Sellwood, and I daresay my German may be inexact:

> In horrible consciousness there I stayed,
> *One* soul with feeling and thought endued,
> 'Mid monsters, afar from earthly aid,
> Alone in that ghastly solitude!
> Far, far from the sound of a human tone,
> In depths which the sea-snake hath called her own.

I am the diver. I am going down into the mysterious depths where the whirlpool swirls, and where, as Schiller says, "a new sea springs from the old sea's breast." But I do not go down because I like the abyss, or think it a habitable place, or particularly desire to cultivate the acquaintance of the dogfish, dragon, and octopus, but to recover the golden chalice of my husband's esteem.'

'My dear Josephine,' answered the rector's wife, 'if I remember the story aright, the page recovered the goblet only because it lodged on a shelf above the abyss tenanted by these monsters. The king cast in the goblet a second time, and then it fell into the uttermost depth, and from thence the lad never rose.'

'It was so. And so, under water there is the shelf, and below it the vast profound. My husband does not belong to that region of horrors. His golden heart has never sunk to

that. As there are stages in our flying island Laputa, so are there shelves below the sea.'

'Very well,' said Mrs. Sellwood. 'You go down under water to the first terrace, and you will find—you yourself admit it, no monsters there—only respectables. I can tell you what you will see—because the dredge brings them up—winkles, cockles, and oysters.'

Josephine began with her sweet pure voice to sing the Mermaid's song in *Oberon*—

> O wie wogt es sich schön auf der Fluth,
> Wenn die müde Welle im Schlummer ruht!

Then, for the first time since Richard had gone, she laughed, not with her old bright, ringing tones, but with a tinge of sadness, and said: 'Oh, Mrs. Sellwood, I shall come up a mermaid, belonging to both realms, that above, and that below, understanding both, and at home in both. What experiences I shall have gone through!'

Mrs. Sellwood threw down her work and put her arms round Josephine, drew her to her bosom, and kissed her. 'You belong to a different order of souls from me, dear child,' she said. 'I am not heroic. I see that you have generous and true impulses, and go your own way. In that you differ from me and such as me. I understand that, by an ingenious contrivance, locomotives are constructed for use in

war-time which lay down their own rails as they go along—of course, travelling very slowly, and always running on rails of their own laying. That is like me, and persons so constituted as I am; we always travel on rails—rails of our own laying. You are not like that; you make furrows.'

'Yes,' said Josephine sorrowfully; 'I tear up the road, throw about stones, and wound passers-by, and upset myself.'

'As you are bent on this experiment—of which I do not quite approve, it is so foreign to anything that I should have considered proper—I am resolved that you shall take a shelf in very shallow water. You must allow me to determine that for you. I have a sister, Miss Otterbourne, who lives near Bath, a very kind old lady, has her prejudices, as is usual with old maids—good, wholesome, well-established prejudices, that hurt no one. She has written to me for a lady's maid. If that situation will do, take it. You will have dived, but we hold you by a hair.'

Josephine thanked Mrs. Sellwood.

Then the rector came in, and with his fresh face a waft of cool bracing air. He squeezed Josephine's hand and kissed his wife.

'My dear Charlotte,' said he to the latter, 'we old fogies have antiquated notions, routine

courses, that are unsuited to extraordinary emergencies. Josephine has been right. Her heart has told her from the beginning what was to be done.—My child, I have seen him; I have spoken with him. I know all the circumstances. I have had my finger on his pulse. Josephine must come down to his level.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ST. KERIAN.

THE village of St. Kerian, in Cornwall, lies about ten miles inland from the north-west coast. It lies in a hollow, a valley down which flows a little stream, that has its source in the granite moors that form the backbone of the long peninsula that constitutes the county of the Cornu-British. Up the valley, clothing its sides, where steep, are oakwoods, copse for the most part; and above the copse rise the bald moors, sprinkled with gorse, and in July, pink with heather, and purple shot with heath. The granite tower of the church peeps above some old lime-trees that form an avenue to the porch, and some Scotch firs that rise with flaky boughs from the churchyard boundary. There the rooks build and burden the velvety green foliage with their rough nests. The tower of the church is square, with the pinnacles cut to lean outwards, as the foliation of a crown—a Cornish peculiarity. Near the churchyard,

communicating with it by a side-door, is the rectory garden, apparently one great pillow of evergreens, laurel and rhododendron, and myrtle and laurestinus; and out of this green pillow appears the slate roof of the parsonage, sunk so deep in the evergreens that only roof and chimneys appear.

The cottages of St. Kerian are for the most part of kneaded clay—locally called cob—the warmest, snuggest, driest material of which a house can be built; a material, which when used as a garden wall, ripens peaches, grapes, apricots on its warm surface. It sucks in the sun's rays as a sponge, and gives out the heat all night. Stand by a cob-wall after a bright day, when white-frost is forming on the grass, and you feel a warm exhalation streaming from the dry clay. Fruit-trees must blossom when nailed against it; and the blossom cannot do other than set, and having set, must glow and swell and mellow and flush with sweetness. The flower-bed under the cob-wall is one that is rampant, luxuriant, always beautiful. In the winter months it is not bare; it has Christmas roses and aconites; it is throwing up and opening flowers at extraordinary times, and ripening strawberries at periods when no one dreams of strawberries.

A few houses are of stone, and the stone,

like the cob, is whitewashed. These houses have slate roofs, and on the slate are orange and white patches of lichen; and on very old slate even masses of golden stonecrop. But the most subdued slate never reaches the softness and sweetness of tone of thatch—the thatch that covers the cob cottages. That is brown and furry and cosy. Verily, the cottars must be princes and princesses to cover their houses with sealskin!

One of the stone houses is the village inn, with the sign of the 'Silver Bowl.' Why this sign? Because the legend told how St. Kerian had gone to sea in a basin of pure silver, and in it had rowed over vast and trackless waters till he reached the land of Paradise. And all the time he was away, a wolf kept watch over his wallet and psalter, that lay on the beach of India.

St. Kerian was, truly, none other than the man in the moon, and the moon was his coracle of silver in which he traversed the dark-blue heavenly seas. But of this the villagers knew nothing. They dimly recollected the old Catholic legend of the miraculous cruise of the patron saint of the parish, and knew that the great silver bowl on the sign-board over the inn referred to the story.

Another stone house belonged to the black-

smith, George Penrose, a plain worthy man, hard working in his forge and out of it: in it, hammering and moulding iron; out of it, digging and growing vegetables in his garden; and especially fond of carnations.

Outside the village, a rifle-shot from the last house that could claim to be in what was locally called the Church-town, stood a poor cottage, built of cob, with a thatched roof. This cottage was but one story high. You could have touched the eaves when standing by it. The door of the cottage opened on the road; but beside it, at one end, was a garden in the shape of an extremely acute triangle; one side was hedged against the road, and the back was hedged against the field. It was obvious at the first glance that this was the cottage of a squatter, who, in times past, when land was of little value, had squatted on a bit of waste ground beside the road, turned it into a garden, and erected the cottage for himself. No one had objected. If the lord of the manor had been told of it, he had laughed and shrugged his shoulders and asked no head-rent. No attempt had been made to dispossess the squatter; and as years passed and he had made no acknowledgment to any man for his house and bit of land, in time he became absolute proprietor of cottage and triangular garden, with

as good a right to it, to hold, to devise, to sell, as the best squire in the neighbourhood and the most substantial yeoman in the parish had to their lands. The cottage had been dug out of a pit at the vertex of the garden, where was now a puddle, and a shivering white willow by it; and the triangle of ground had been reclaimed from the roadside by old Jonathan, the father of Zackie and of Bessie Cable's mother.

This was the estate—this, and seventy-eight pounds five shillings and tenpence—which fell as an inheritance to Bessie Cable on the death of her uncle; and to this freehold estate Richard moved with his mother and little children, and into it he settled; Bessie Cable being its sole and undisputed, and, indeed, indisputable possessor. Not another relative in Cornwall, nay, in the wide world, had Uncle Zackie. I am sorry to say it, but it is true, and must be said —the people of St. Kerian did not hail the arrival of the Cables with enthusiasm, were by no means inclined to show them much hospitality. St. Kerian's people were Cornish Kelts to the ends of their fingers and toes, without one drop of Saxon blood in their veins. They were a people who shut themselves up in their exclusiveness, as they were shut in by nature by their moors. It might be true that Bessie Cable was linked to the place by her mother;

but her mother had chosen to desert the house of her childhood and 'go foreign;' and Mrs. Cable was foreign born and bred; she did not even speak like a Cornish woman. All England, even Devon, most of all the eastern counties, was foreign to the Cornishman, foreign as Timbuctoo and Alaska.

The St. Kerian's people did not come out to meet and welcome the new landed proprietor and his family who came into their midst; they looked on him with suspicion and jealousy. Richard Cable, grown peculiarly sensitive and irritable, felt this, and resented it. He would have as little to do as was possible with the St. Kerian's folk. Besides, he was disappointed. The cottage and the land were much smaller than he had expected. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* He had imagined a roomy house, with gardens and paddock, and perhaps some out-buildings. He was wofully downcast when he arrived at the hovel in the waggon on the straw. The cottage was plainly furnished, and in tolerable repair. It was obvious that a hard time was before him. He was poor, though a landed proprietor. His estate, like that of so many squires in the present day, would not maintain him. He would have to work, and work hard, to feed the seven little maiden mouths at home, as well as his own and his

mother's. Potatoes, as he knew by experience, would go like wildfire ; bread would vanish as moisture in the east wind. The three-cornered garden would not grow cabbages and turnips enough for all these little stomachs that demanded of it food daily. Think ! Three hundred and sixty-five days make up the year. Multiplied by eight, that makes two thousand nine hundred and twenty meals—only one *per diem*—to be got out of that little garden ; and that, moreover, without making any count of food for Richard himself. But they must have supper as well as dinner. For dinner, potatoes ; for supper, kail ; so that in reality the demands on the triangular patch reclaimed from the roadside would amount—if the father was to eat anything out of it except earth and stones—to six thousand five hundred and seventy meals.

Richard Cable had always been a reserved man. He was now more reserved than of old. At Hanford, he had associated with his mates without ever becoming what they would call 'one of themselves.' At St. Kerian he associated with no one. The Cornish people are inveterate talkers. It is said that a loquacious person can talk the hind-legs off a horse ; if so, it is a wonder that any legs remain on the horses in the West. Everything is made to give way

to talk—the most pressing business, the most urgent duties. Indeed, the most imperious call of a Cornishman's nature is to talk. It is said that in the navy the officers are shy of West-country sailors, because they are such talkers. The Cornish are a kindly people, who like their neighbours to be 'free' with them—that is, to run into their houses at all hours for a talk and allow them to reciprocate.

Dicky Cable went near none of the villagers of St. Kerian, hardly spoke to them; when he did, it was on necessary matters. He let them understand that he objected to have his kitchen invaded at all times, and to have his proceedings scrutinised and canvassed. He was a busy man. He had to work for seven little children, and had not time to talk. With him, every minute was precious; it meant a patch on Mary's shoe, threescore stitches in Martha's stocking that he was knitting; the shaping of a wooden head to Bessie's doll; a bit of tilling of the garden that fed them all. Every idle minute sows a weed, said Richard.

The villagers, who grudged the invasion of the parish by foreigners, were not conciliated by Cable's manner; they could not understand that he had other crops to cultivate than good-fellowship.

Mrs. Cable also, in spite of her Cornish

blood, was no talker. Had she been a gossip, all would have been well. When you come across a Frenchman, in a railway carriage or in a café, he tells you the history of his love, the circumstances of his marriage, and the ages and temperaments of his children; and expects similar confidences on your part. The Frenchman has a pleasure in turning himself inside out before you, like a glove. This is because he is a Kelt, and craves for sympathy. The Cornish are Kelts also, and they overflow with frankness, and exact reciprocity in candour. The St. Kerian people wanted to know the complete history of the Cable family, and demanded it as a right. Bessie would tell nothing. The mother of the children was dead—that was enough for them to know. Of Richard's second marriage not a word was breathed; no suspicion of it entered a St. Kerian imagination, and the Cornish imagination is no sterile faculty. As certain soils will grow all kinds of plants although nothing is sown in them, so with the imaginative faculty: it will produce crops of most varied weeds, growing where you could swear not a seed of fact had been dropped.

The times were hard for Richard. He had recovered so as to walk about; but he walked lamely and could not go far. Work for which he was suited was not easy to be got. Work

by means of which he could live at ease was not to be got at all.

The little patrimony that had come to Bessie Cable melted away. The necessary things to be bought, the doctor's bill, the bill at the 'Magpie,' the feeding and clothing of the little ones—all ate into seventy-eight pounds five shillings and tenpence. Uncle Zackie had but a single bed. Now, several were needed, and they had to be purchased. One cup and saucer, and a single plate, a gridiron and a frying-pan, had sufficed for Uncle Zackie; this would not meet the requirements of nine persons, and had to be supplemented.

Then, again, all the clothes of Richard, his mother, and his children had been 'salved' in the wreck, and were therefore lost to him. It was necessary to buy fresh clothes. What had been 'salved' was past recovery.

Seven little girls! Was not that enough to break a poor man's heart? Was it not selfish and cruel of Polly to spread her wings and fly to a better world and there enter into rest, and leave him alone in this rough world to battle with hunger and cold—with seven little maidens on his back? No wonder that his back began to bend; no wonder that his flesh fell away, and he looked thin and transparent; no wonder his clothes were so poor and patched. But his

seven little girls were plump and upright and sturdy and neat. He stinted himself of everything that they might lack nothing. It was a desperate battle, and only strong love could have nerved him to fight it. If Richard Cable could have gone to sea, he might have earned something better than what he could pick up at St. Kerian; but he had either taken a distaste to the sea since his last voyage, or he could not bring himself to leave his children any more.

He went about the parish to the farmers, limping on his stiff leg, and asked for work. Could he hedge? He had never learned the art, and let me tell the reader that hedging is an art, an art which School Boards are killing; it is an art to be acquired in boyhood, and there is hardly a young man nowadays who can hedge. Did he know anything about cattle? He had had no experience, and not a farmer would entrust his cattle to him, that he might acquire experience on them. Could he plough? He had never tried; and ploughing is not to be acquired at any year after fifteen. A walking postman was needed for five parishes, the pay six-and-sixpence per week; the distance to be walked, fair weather or foul, twenty miles—but then, Richard was lame; so he refused the six-and-six.

The parish authorities, the whole neigh-

bourhood, that is, all five parishes—took it ill that he rejected the office of walking postman so liberally offered him. That he was lame, was his concern, not theirs. He rejected the office because he was proud; he was puffed up with pride because he was a foreigner. What could be expected of a man who had begotten seven little girls and not a boy? Seven little maids! What was to become of them if their father died? They and their grandmother would have to go to the workhouse; and who would have to pay for them there, for feeding, for fattening of them, for clothing, and educating them? Who but the ratepayers? No wonder that, with such a prospect, the ratepayers looked on Richard Cable with a resentful eye.

He got work at last—work for the time being—he took it resentfully, surlily, with gall in his heart—work on the roads.

Since Richard had crossed the threshold, not once had Josephine been named. One might have supposed that, as far as Richard was concerned, no such person existed.

Since he had entered that cottage, no allusion had been made by him or his mother to the fortune of Gabriel Gotham. They had but to make their necessities known, and they could have as much money as they needed.

But Richard would have died, his mother would have died, one and other would have sat silent, and watched the seven little girls die of starvation rather than touch a penny of that fortune. They were proud, were these Cables, mother and son; their pride was inflexible as iron.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A SPIKE IN THE NEST.

THE mind of Mr. Cornellis was at ease. So completely satisfied was he that nothing was to be apprehended which could annoy him, that he went to town 'on business,' as he told his sister and daughter; really that he might amuse himself, and he remained away from Hanford a fortnight.

When his affairs were in an unsatisfactory condition, and he saw that only desperate measures could avail, not to recover him, but to stave off a complete break-up, he had begun to draw towards his old associates and dupes. His conversation had acquired a sanctimonious savour, and the cut of his coat had something clerical about it. He laid aside his rather highly coloured ties, and adopted black. A moustache he had been cultivating disappeared. But when Josephine had acquired the fortune of Gabriel Gotham, all necessity for picking up the old threads of his former life passed away,

and he dropped once more the acquaintances, and the formalities and restraints he had with a bad grace reassumed under the cogency of adverse circumstances. He was an exceedingly shrewd man, as shrewd as he was unprincipled; he knew the foibles, the follies, the weaknesses of men; but what he did not know, and made no allowance for, were the noble and generous impulses of the heart. He traced all action in life to springs—but these springs were always mean and selfish; consequently he was occasionally foiled in his calculations.

He did not understand his daughter's nature, because he was unable to understand that she could be actuated by any motives involving self-sacrifice. He respected her intelligence, and he relied on her wit saving her from doing anything injurious to her prospects. Her marriage with Cable had been a puzzle to him; but he supposed that it was due to an unreasoning passion for a time blinding her eyes to her interests. That she regretted her marriage, he had no doubt; that she no longer loved Richard, he was aware, and he was consequently well assured that she would take no steps to bring about a reconciliation, and a repetition of the ridiculous and disagreeable incidents of the past month, which must follow

in the train of a reconciliation. As there are two hemispheres in the brain, and we can therefore simultaneously think of two matters at once—as, for instance, we can read aloud, and be meditating at the same time on something different, or we can converse with a visitor, and whilst so doing take an estimate of her dress, and note where the braid is off and a glove is burst—so are there double, and even more than double springs in every heart, and none can tell at once which is in the ascendent. There is always, and there always must be, an element of uncertainty in the determinations, and consequent actions, of every man, for this reason. We cannot tell at once which of the springs, even if we recognise their existence, is the strongest, and what the correcting and controlling force of the other that is acting in opposition. Indeed, it is not usual that any one of the springs asserts itself as a mainspring till late on in life, and in no inconsiderable number of persons none ever does so assert itself.

Mr. Cornellis regarded his fellow-men much as billiard-balls; he had only to walk round the table, level his cue, rest the end between his thumb and forefinger, and strike, calculating to a nicety the angle at which the balls would fly apart; the cannoning and pocketing would

follow as a matter of course. All went by rule of dynamics. And Mr. Cornellis would have been right had all his balls been perfectly round, and absolutely solid, and his table nicely levelled. But these were elements in the game that did not enter into his calculation.

It is said that the Englishman rushes into war thoroughly despising his enemy, and that this is the cause of the majority of the disasters which mark the initiation of a campaign. Mr. Cornellis shared the Englishman's contempt for an enemy—that is, for every one with whom he had dealings. He undervalued his powers; he disbelieved in moral force, and consequently made no provision to counteract its effects. Stupidity he could allow for; and when he encountered strong principle, he misjudged it, and eschewed it as stupidity deeper than what he had allowed.

Mr. Cornellis and the rector viewed the world of men from opposed points. The latter was surprised and troubled when he found that other motives swayed men's conduct than truth and honour and love; and Mr. Cornellis was perplexed and angry when he came across those who were not either intensely stupid or wholly self-seeking. Neither liked the other. Mr. Sellwood was forced to mistrust Cornellis; but he never could persuade himself that Josephine's

father was as devoid of principle as his clear common-sense obliged him to suspect.

When Mr. Cornellis went to town 'on business,' he gave no address where he might be found; he did not desire to be worried by his sister's letters concerning the trivialities of Hanford life; consequently, his daughter was unable to communicate her intention to him till he was pleased to emerge from the seclusion in which he had kept himself and shrouded his acts whilst in town. When, after a visit to London that lasted somewhat over a fortnight, and had cost him a considerable sum of money, Mr. Cornellis reappeared at Hanford, not much fagged with his business, in a completely new suit, in the latest fashion, from the best tailor, and with a new diamond pin in his tie, he was not in the smallest degree prepared for the surprise his daughter had in store for him.

Mr. Cornellis had never taken pains to gain his daughter's affections; he was aware that he had not her esteem; there was always present between them an invisible barrier. When two intellects are set in opposition, and the male and elder is aware that the other is its match, there ensues a sense of injury and aversion. It dreads a contest, lest it should sustain a fall. Mr. Cornellis had seen his daughter's mind and

character from under his eye with an independence that annoyed him. He had not moulded them—they had shaped themselves. Where he had interfered, his interference had brought about results the opposite to what he designed. The chronic antagonism between them had not broken out into civil war till Josephine had declared her intention to her father of taking Richard as her husband. After one savage passage-of-arms, a truce ensued; the father knew he had gone too far, and he used all his arts to recover the lost ground. The marriage of Josephine had brought her closer to him than she had been in her previous life. She had been forced to acknowledge that he was right in his opposition, and to submit to his guidance. He had acquired an ascendency that satisfied him, and he rashly supposed that this ascendency was final and secure. Mr. Cornellis had written to announce his return, and to order the carriage to meet him at the station. He was surprised to see Josephine on the platform ready to receive him, when he arrived from town by the train he had mentioned. This was an attention he had not anticipated. She was dressed very quietly in her blue serge, and with a close straw bonnet trimmed with navy-blue ribbons.

'Why—Josephine,' said he, taking her arm

as he stepped out of the carriage, 'what new fad is this—dressing like a superior domestic?'

'I am glad you have arrived as appointed,' said she, without answering his question. 'Had you come by a later train, I might have missed you. I am going off by the next up-train.'

'Indeed? Whither?'

'Will you come with me into the ladies' waiting-room—there is no one there—or walk with me on the platform, whilst I tell you what I have to say?'

'Well—be sharp. I want to get home, and cannot detain the horses.'

They walked together out of the station along the platform, where there was no one to overhear their conversation.

'You are looking well, papa. I hope you have enjoyed your visit to town?'

'I have been steeped to the ears in business,' he replied. 'I got into Kettner's occasionally, and had something really good to eat, neither over-salted nor under-spiced. When I am a little out of sorts, I run in there and have a bowl of *bisque*. It sets my stomach right when nothing else does—light and nourishing. I am fond of Kettner's, quiet—and good wines. The waiter there knows me, and is attentive.'

'Papa, I am going.'

'So you have told me; but I have not been informed whither.'

'I am going into Somersetshire—near Bath.'

'What for?'

She hesitated. She was a brave girl, but she shrank from the scene that must occur. The rector, aware that the interview would be unpleasant, had volunteered to relieve Josephine of the duty of telling her father what had been determined and done. But she had declined his offer, and had resolved—it must be admitted, with a spice of craft—to break the intelligence to her father almost in public and a minute before she departed. After that quarrel with him which had driven her desperate and made her plunge into the sea, she shrank from a private interview; and she knew that if he were told what she had decided on whilst she remained at Hanford, the house would be insupportable. Whatever he might say, he could not alter her mind. His absence had enabled her to dispose of everything, undisturbed; and now all that remained to be done was to inform him of arrangements already completed; and as soon as this was done and she were away, the better for both.

'For the life of me,' said Mr. Cornellis, 'I cannot see why that precious idiot of a cook of ours should never make *bisque* to my fancy.

No great difficulty in pounding prawns, I should have thought.—By the way, Josephine—artichoke soup with crushed almonds is worth living for.'

'Papa, I have something very important to tell you.—Never mind about soups now. I am afraid'—with a touch of her old self—'I am going to salt and flavour your soup not at all to your taste.'

'Go on with what you have to say; I am impatient to be on my way in the carriage.'

'My train will start in five minutes. I have my ticket, and my boxes are labelled. But I have only five minutes in which to tell you something that will surprise and, I fear, annoy you greatly.'

'Upon my word,' said Mr. Cornellis, irritably, 'you have the knack of making one uncomfortable. You treat me as the boys treat the plovers. When they have found a nest on the downs, they drive a spiked stick into the ground at the bottom, so that the poor bird cannot sit on her eggs comfortably, and she goes on laying till she has heaped her eggs over the spike, so as to make her seat tolerable. What new stake have you been driving into my home? My whole time and energies are taken up with covering the

prickles and goads you fabricate for my torment.'

'You have been from home, papa, so it has not been possible for me to consult you since the rector returned from Cornwall.'

'What did he find there?'

'The yacht was wrecked; but Richard and the children and his mother are saved; the other poor fellows are lost.'

'Things might have been managed better,' growled Mr. Cornellis.

'Poor Richard has injured his thigh, and is likely to be lamed for life.'

'If he be tied by the leg to the Cornish rocks, so much the better. Are you going as the eagle to tear the entrails of your Prometheus?'

'Papa, I have been considering about Cousin Gabriel's legacy. You let me accept it; you let me marry Richard without telling me who Richard was. I have learned that now; and I know that Cousin Gabriel performed an act of gross injustice in not recognising his son and leaving his estate to him.'

'That was Gotham's concern.'

'I have inherited what ought to belong to Richard. I have considered the situation, and I have resolved not to take the legacy.'

'You have taken it.'

'I am going to—no, to be correct—I have already—surrendered it.'

'I do not understand you.'

'I have no right to the estate. When the rector went to Cornwall, I told him to offer it to Richard. You know, papa, that Cousin Gabriel left everything in trust till I married, and that at marriage I became sole possessor, with entire liberty to do what I liked with the property. I was so sure, when I came to consider matters, that Cousin Gabriel meant the estate to pass to his son, through me, that I could in conscience do no other than transfer it to Richard. I have striven to do what is right, and I have made the transfer.'

'You do not mean——' Mr. Cornellis could not finish the sentence; he had turned the colour of a Jerusalem artichoke.

'I do indeed mean what I say, papa. I have been with the lawyer, and Mr. Sellwood has helped me, and it is all done. The difficulty we have had to contend with is, that Richard absolutely refuses to accept what I offer. I did not think myself justified in retaining any share, and I wanted to make over every penny unreservedly to Richard; but Mr. Sellwood and the solicitor have advised me otherwise, and I have retained an annuity of two hundred and fifty pounds for my separate use as long as

I live. But, papa, I had already made up my mind to touch nothing of Cousin Gotham's money—so long as I do not share it with Richard, I mean—till I can receive it from him. So I will not have this annuity for my own self; I give it to you. You shall enjoy that; and, unless Richard objects, which is not likely, you can live at the Hall——'

'On two hundred and fifty!'

'Of course the place must be kept up, and the maintenance of the house and estate will be paid out of the estate. I do not see why you should not continue to live at the Hall; you will have the two hundred and fifty in addition to your own private income, and have the house and garden rent free.'

He turned his face towards her and opened his mouth to speak. The face was livid and quivering with evil passion. Every veil of disguise had fallen; the ugly villainy of the man's soul glared at her out of his eyes. She shuddered. He looked, with his mouth open, as if he could have flown at her and bitten her. He could not speak; he was too greatly agitated to utter a word.

'Shall we turn back towards the station?' continued Josephine. 'I see it is time for me to be getting into my carriage. I have not much more to say. If I have forgotten any-

thing, Mr. Sellwood will supply the deficiency. Richard is angry with me, and he has cause to be angry. I shall never rest till he forgives me and takes me to his heart again. I have been unworthy of him. I was not well advised; but my own heart was rebellious. I have been proud, and now I am going into the world to learn humility. Papa, Mr. Sellwood will explain to you the course I have elected. I have told Aunt Judith; but she cannot understand. I intend to earn my own livelihood, and earn Richard's respect. There—the bell is ringing; I really must be off. I have taken a third-class ticket. Let my arm go, papa. Say good-bye; we shall not meet again for some time. If I have been unlike a daughter to you and failed in love—I ask your pardon. I fear—I fear that I have driven a spike into the nest that wounds you.'

'That *impales* me,' groaned Mr. Cornellis.

CHAPTER XL.

THE FIRST SHELF.

Miss Otterbourne lived in a handsome old square Queen Anne mansion near Bath. It was built of Bath stone, with rusticated quoins to the angles, with pillars to the grand entrance. A stiff, stately house, with large park-like grounds and beautiful terraced gardens. The house, Bewdley Manor, was about four miles from the station; and when Josephine arrived, a private omnibus was in waiting to receive her and her boxes. The coachman was in half livery, the boy out of it. They had come to fetch a servant, so they wore as little of the badge of servitude as might be, just as the officers of Her Majesty throw off their uniform the moment they are off parade.

'Be you the young lady as is coming to our place?' asked the boy, addressing Josephine.

'If you will explain to me what your place

is,' answered Josephine, 'I may perhaps be able to answer your question.'

'Miss Otterbourne is our old lady,' said the boy. 'You take a hold of that end of the box, and we'll give it a hoist and heave it up on the roof. Looky' here; stand on the axle, and you'll get it up.'

'I will call the porter to help you,' observed Josephine coldly.

'As you like, young woman; but mind you—you tip him if he comes and helps.'

Josephine considered a moment; then, without summoning the porter, stepped on the axle, and assisted in lifting her box upon the roof of the omnibus. If she tipped the porter, it would be with Richard's money. She had come to Bewdley to be a servant; she must begin to work at once.

When she sat by herself in the conveyance with her small parcels, she began to realise for the first time the complete change in her circumstances. In the train she had thought of her father, of Hanford, of Aunt Judith, of the Sellwoods, with a tenderness and melting of the heart which ever and anon filled her eyes. She had spent a happy youth at dear Hanford, following her own whims, going out in her boat as she liked, playing on her piano when she liked, amusing herself in the garden or in

the house, undirected, uncontrolled by any one. Now, she was about to pass into a position where she would not be able to call her time her own, where she might follow her own desires in nothing. At Hanford, she had been surrounded with friends—the kind, good Sellwoods; Lady Brentwood; old Sir John; her affectionate but stupid aunt. Every one knew her there. Now, she was entering the society of total strangers. If she were about to associate with strangers of her own station, it would have been less disquieting; but she was plunging into a social stratum which was to her as strange as the persons composing it, who were about to become her daily companions.

It was already evening and dusk as she entered the private omnibus at the station; and she was tired with her journey by train, and with the strain on her mind through which she had passed. Through the square windows of the carriage she saw dimly the meadows, the high hedges, the trees, the cottages, where the lamps were being lighted. She heard the coachman and the boy salute and cast jokes at passing labourers. She saw and heard all, and without taking notice of anything. What she saw and heard mixed with what passed in her head, and formed a conglomerate of conflicting and new experiences and ideas, that left her

bewildered and frightened. Presently, the coachman shouted and drew up; then, through the windows, Josephine saw a lodge, and a girl came out and threw apart the iron gates into a park. In another moment the carriage passed through, and the wheels rolled over the smooth drive to the house. Josephine saw that the grounds were extensive, wide lawns over which white mist was settling, out of which rose grand clumps of beech and elm, and here and there a solitary cedar. Then the omnibus turned out of the main drive, and in another moment was rattling over the pavement of the court behind the house. The carriage stopped. The boy came to the door and opened it.

'Here you are, miss,' he said. 'Step up on the axle and help me down with your box; unless you'd like to get on the roof yourself and pass it down to me.'

'I am afraid I shall not be strong enough to support it. Cannot a groom or some other man help?'

'Oh, I don't know. I reckon if you want anything done here, you must do it yourself. Every one here is so frightfully engaged over his own work, and it is no one's place to help another.' However, the boy condescended to shout, and a footman came to the kitchen door. 'The young lady wants to be helped with her

box,' said the boy; whereupon the footman came leisurely across the yard and took a good survey of Josephine, especially of her face.

'Come,' said he graciously, 'as you're so good-looking, I don't mind helping you. A little wanting in style, p'r'aps. I am Mr. Polkinghorn, and you are Miss—Miss——'

'Cable is my name,' answered Josephine curtly.

'No particular objection to alter it, I s'pose?' said the footman, who laughed at his joke. 'But it takes two to effect that—don't it, miss?' And he laughed again. 'You'll excuse my sportiveness, miss,' said he, taking the box on his shoulder as the boy let it down from the roof of the carriage; 'I'm generally considered a wit.'

When the box was on the ground, he dusted his shoulders and arms, and asked: 'And pray, what sort of people were you with last? Any style about 'em? People of rank and position and fortune?'

'This is my first place,' answered Josephine.

'You don't mean to say so! How on earth did our old woman come to take you, miss? Oh, I remember—you was recommended by the Sellwoods. I knew them—not exactly intimately, but off and on; they

come here to stay with our party. You see, they are relatives; and the cap'n will inherit our little place after the old bird hops.'

'Hops?' repeated Josephine, not understanding him.

'Ay—kicks.'

'Kicks? I don't understand.'

'Hops the twig, kicks the bucket. How dull you are! I fear your education has been neglected. I observe there is something countrified and gawky about you. Don't be uneasy; we'll put you to rights soon. Now, my dear, take this handle, and Charley shall hold the other, and we'll soon have the box into the kitchen. You'll excuse me lending a hand—a weight on the muscles of my arm makes them shake, and I have to be very particular that they are not unsteady. I have to carry the glass and plate, and the candles. I wouldn't spill the wax on the carpet not for worlds. So you know old Sellwood, do you? A worthy old chap. Pity he's a parson; he ought to be squire. I know his elder brother, and don't think much of him. There's not the true ring about him, that I like to find in the British aristocracy. The grand old English gentleman—you know the song. The young man will inherit this property, you know—it's a tidy estate. One can live on

it without any of your dirty, sneaking, underhand pinching. Look here, pretty! Don't encourage no familiarities on the part of Mr. Vickary, the butler. He and I differ in politics. He's an out-and-out Radical, and it is asserted he has got a wife stowed away somewhere. You can always fall back on me, if he makes advances. My name is Mr. Polkinghorn. There is a village in the west of England that takes its name from our family. Cable is your name, is it? Rather clumsy work tying a true-lover's knot in a cable. You'll excuse my fun, dear; I'm always considered a wag.'

Josephine's face was dark with indignation and with heat, when she reached the kitchen. Mr. Polkinghorn had made her carry one side of the box, whilst he walked behind advising steadiness, as she and the stable-boy ascended the steps to the kitchen, carrying the box.

At the door, Mr. Polkinghorn gave Josephine an aside: 'Mind you give yourself no airs, miss. Airs ain't tolerated in our little place. It's the one thing we can't swallow. Airs are, so to speak, fatal.'

He stepped nimbly over the box into the middle of the kitchen, and addressed a portly woman there, wearing an apron, and a flaming red face: 'Mrs. Purvis, allow me to introduce

Miss Cable to you—a young lady introduced to us by our mutual friends the Sellwoods. She solicits your kind patronage. This, Miss Cable, is our artist, Mrs. Purvis;' aside, behind his hand, 'Cook.'

Then to a maid-servant: 'Miss Woods, permit me—Miss Cable, Miss Woods. Where is Miss Raffles? Oh, attending to duties upstairs; very well. Sorry not to be able to introduce you to Miss Raffles. She is drawing the blinds, I presume. But here is our sprightly Miss Wagstaff, a host in herself. Miss Wagstaff, Miss Cable; Miss Cable, Miss Wagstaff.' Then, aside, 'Scullery-maid.'

'What is the meaning of this?' asked Mrs. Purvis, without noticing Josephine. 'Is my kitchen a back hall, is it a lumber-room? What have you dared for to bring a box in here for, and—preserve us, a cage with a bird in it? Is this an aviary and zoological garden? Take 'em all away at once. Mr. Polkinghorn, Charley, what do you mean? Take 'em away instantly into the back hall. I'm not going to have my kitchen made into a rummage, not for any Cables or Tables or what you may call 'em.'

'It's the curry,' whispered Mr. Polkinghorn to Josephine. 'When there's anything for dinner requiring cayenne, or chilli, or anything

spicy and hot—it gets into her temper. She'll be right enough when she's slept it off. Come along. I'll show you the way with the box into the back hall. Charley! help the lady. Miss Woods, is it asking too much of you that you should step up to Mrs. Grundy and inform her of the arrival of the lady recommended to us by the Sellwoods?' Then aside, 'Housekeeper, Grundy is.'

'Hulloa!' exclaimed the butler, stepping in, a man with white head, red blotched face, and yellow, watery eyes—a man with a sour and dogged look. 'Our new arrival. Humph! Had a long journey. You shall have a glass of cherry brandy with your supper.'

'He approves of you,' whispered Mr. Polkinghorn, 'or he would not have offered cherry brandy. Beware! He don't offer mistress's cherry brandy to everyone. Miss Raffles has never wetted her lips to it, I believe. Mr. Vickary doesn't like her. Her nose is badly shaped.'

Josephine was taken to the housekeeper's room. Mrs. Grundy gave orders for her box to be taken upstairs, and who was to do it? Without orders, no one did anything; and with orders, did extra work grumbling.

Josephine was shown her room by the second housemaid, Jane. She would not have

a room to herself; she must share that of Jane —that is, of Miss Raffles. The room was at the top of the house; it was lighted through a small window, concealed from sight without by a stone parapet. The window, therefore, looked upon a blank wall three feet off. Not a ray of sun could penetrate the room; all the light it received was reflected from this parapet, that was covered with mildew and lichen. In Queen Anne's time, mansions were erected with strict adherence to proportion; and if servants' rooms were needed, they were crowded into the roof and hidden from sight. The tall windows belonged to state-rooms and the dwelling-rooms of the gentry. Those who ministered to their wants were stowed away in out-of-the-way corners, lighted through passages, from staircases, by panes of glass let into the roof. Anything was good enough for them.

'You see,' said Miss Raffles, 'the window is nailed up. That's Mrs. Grundy's doings. The servants' windows all look out on the leads, the gutter that runs round the parapet, and they could get in and out and run round and pay each other visits just as they liked—and there was some goings on, I can tell you. So Mrs. Grundy had the carpenter up, and he screwed up all the windows that they don't open any

more. Lor' bless you, it don't matter so far as air goes; we are at the top of the house, and that ought to be the airiest.'

Josephine seated herself on her bed and leaned her head in her hand. This was the hardest trial of all—not to have a room to herself. If she could have been given the smallest garret chamber, in which she could at times be alone, it would have been endurable; but she felt that this was more than she could bear, to have no privacy day or night.

'I hope,' said Miss Raffles, 'you'll get on with our mistress. She ain't bad if you get the right side of her. But, mind you, keep on terms with Mr. Vickary, the butler; he well-nigh rules the mistress. She thinks him the most dutiful and faithful and excellent man. She takes his advice on everything; and if he don't like a servant, it ain't long that servant remains in the house. I don't think much of Mr. Vickary myself. They say he has two or three wives, and has them still stowed away in different parts of the country unbeknown to each other. Mr. Vickary is that deep in the mistress's confidence that she lets him manage her money matters for her — leastways, in household expenses. Hark! There's the bell ringing for us. Mrs. Grundy has a wire to the top of the house, and calls us, if we go up just

now and then to lie down and read a novel. She thinks now we've been too long; or perhaps the mistress wants to see you. We won't go down at once. Let them wait. You haven't unpacked your box yet, nor I seen what you have got. I say, have you a photograph of your young man? Drat it! there's the bell again. I suppose it is missus, so we must go down; or—I say—if you give me your key, I will unpack your box for you.'

Josephine went slowly downstairs without answering the loquacious Jane. Her heart sank within her. Would she be able to endure this association with chattering, empty-headed housemaids, conceited and pert footmen, and a tyrannous, unprincipled butler? Mrs. Grundy struck her as a formal, dull woman whose chief ambition was to stand well with her mistress and retain her place. If Mr. Vickary lorded it in the house Mrs. Grundy would shut one eye to his misdeeds.

Josephine had taken off her wedding ring when she left Hanford. She carried it hung round her neck by a small silk ribbon. It would not do for her to wear it. The sight of the ring would provoke questions which it would be difficult for her to answer.

The housekeeper was at the foot of the backstairs. 'Miss Otterbourne desires to see

the new lady's-maid.—You have no need to wear a cap. A lady's-maid is not required to have one. Follow me, Miss Cable.'

Mrs. Grundy led Josephine out through a side-door upon the main staircase. The back-stairs were exceedingly tortuous and steep, so tortuous and steep that it was difficult to descend them quickly without a fall. The grand staircase occupied a well in the middle of the house; the flight was broad, the steps deep, the rise slight. The steps were carpeted with rich pile purple and crimson and maroon.

Miss Otterbourne sat in the great drawing-room, a lofty and very stately room, that at first glance reminded Josephine of the parlour at Brentwood. It had in the centre a glass chandelier, encased in yellow gauze, which looked like a gigantic silkworm's cocoon suspended from the ceiling. Large and handsome oil-paintings covered the walls. The furniture was gilt; curtains and chairs and sofa-covers were of crimson satin.

At the end of the room was a fireplace with a wood-fire burning cheerfully in it, and near the fire, at a small table, on which was a lamp, sat a very little lady, with white hair done into barrel-curls about her brow; dressed in slate-gray rich silk, and wearing a Barège handsome shawl over her shoulders.

'Grundy,' said Miss Otterbourne, 'may I trouble you to ring the bell for William? I want another log putting on the fire, and the pieces of half-burnt wood heaping together with the tongs.'

'Certainly, miss,' answered the housekeeper, and rang the bell.

'Oh,' said Miss Otterbourne, 'is this the young person recommended to me by my sister?' She put on her glasses and looked at Josephine. The room was so vast, the light from the lamp so slight, that she could not see much of Josephine. 'Oh—you look rather young and inexperienced. But of course my sister—that is, Mrs. Sellwood—knows. I rely on her. I hope you will conduct yourself satisfactorily.—Oh, William, another log, please. I believe there are some still in the wood-basket.—Mrs. Grundy, you will see that this young person has refreshment. She need not enter on her duties till to-morrow. She is probably tired with her journey from Hanford. I have never been to Hanford myself. I do not care to leave Bewdley, as the vibration of a railway upsets me.—Dear me! Grundy, will you touch the bell again? I want to tell William to make quite sure the fire is out before he goes to bed. I suppose, Grundy, the horses can hardly be taken out so as to give

me a drive to-morrow? they have been to the station to-day for this young person.—That will do, Grundy.—I hope you will conduct yourself well, Cable. My servants are tried and trusty. You can always refer in all matters to Mrs. Grundy or to Mr. Vickary; they know my tastes and opinions.'

When the housekeeper left the room with Josephine, she signed to her to attend her in the little parlour which she occupied herself.

'You may sit here,' she said graciously, 'for a while. I will talk to you, and you can listen. I will tell you what you have to do.—Miss Otterbourne is a very kind mistress, if you conduct yourself properly; that is, if you satisfy Mr. Vickary and me. Miss Otterbourne has the greatest regard for my opinion and for that of Mr. Vickary. Now, mind, you never complain to me of anything Mr. Vickary says or does; nor of anything that goes on in the kitchen, about broken meat or so on; nor about the dairy. The dairymaid manages that and it is no concern of yours. You are lady's-maid, and it is no concern of yours what goes on outside your department. All that is my affair and Mr. Vickary's. Live and let live, say I.—Now, mind, you don't try to disturb the mistress's confidence in Mr. Vickary or me; for if you do, it will be so much the worse for you.

You will very likely have to leave without a character.'

Josephine's head was sinking on her bosom; a feeling as if she had been struck on the head and stunned deprived her of the power of speech.

'A lady's-maid,' pursued Mrs. Grundy, 'has a place so near her mistress's ear that she can make herself very unpleasant, or the reverse, to her fellow-servants.—Now, please to remember that all will go pleasant if you don't say anything but good to the mistress about Mr. Vickary and me. If, however, you attempt any insinuating and countermining, it will be yourself as will suffer. You understand that?'

'May I have a post-card, Mrs. Grundy?'

'Certainly, if you have a ha'penny to pay for it. What do you want it for?'

'I promised to send a line to—to Mrs. Sellwood, when I reached this place.'

The housekeeper produced the card, and indicated ink and a pen.

Then Josephine took the pen, dipped it, wrote the address dreamily, turned the card, and on the other side inscribed these words only:

'Yes—winkles, cockles, oysters.—J. C.'

CHAPTER XLI.

SEVEN RED WINDOWS.

A CURIOUS sight it was to see Cable breaking stones on an early summer day, with his children about him, sitting on the heap, playing in the road, crouching into the hedge, and at noon clustering around him whilst he divided among them the cold potato-pasty that constituted the family dinner. But it was on Saturday only that this little conclave assembled, when there was no school. On all other days the elder children were learning their letters and the art of sewing in the National School. The winter had passed hardly for Richard Cable, and for his mother, who had become infirm with age and trouble. She did not complain; but her face was paler and more sharp in feature, her movements were less rapid, her hair had become grayer. A tree ill bears transplantation, and Bessie had been uprooted from a comfortable home, from associations sad, painful, and yet cherished as

associations, and carried away to a strange corner of Britain, where she was subjected to hardships to which she was unaccustomed. The work Richard got was not such as to bring in much pay, and it was not work for an able-bodied man. Sometimes he sat on the side of the road against the hedge and broke stones with a long hammer; at others he hobbled about the road scraping it and cleaning the water table. He got very wet over his work, and then rheumatism made itself felt in his weak thigh.

One consideration troubled Richard Cable night and day, and the trouble grew as the children oldened. How could the cottage be made to accommodate them all when they were grown up? How could his scanty earnings be made to sustain the whole family when the children were young women, and exacted more of him? Would he be constrained to send his daughters into service? The notion galled him. He racked his brains to discover what situations would be suitable for them, and how they could be guarded from harm when in them away from their grandmother's watchful eye and his protecting arm. He could not endure the thought of his darlings separated from himself and from one another, dispersed among farmhouses, surrounded by

coarse associates, hearing loose talk, seeing unbecoming sights. He dreamed of his Mary or his Martha or Effie in such associations, and woke, flinging his arms about, crying out, leaping from his bed, to throttle those who thus offended his little ones.

As he sat breaking stones, sometimes the mica in the stones glittered in the sun; he wondered whether he should chance on a nugget of gold or a thread of silver, and so make his fortune. But such an idea, when it rose, embittered him the more. No; there was no chance of his finding gold thus; for that he must go to California, and that he could not do, because he might not leave his helpless children. Silver! If he lit on a vein, what would it profit him? Others would enter in and quarry the precious metal; the mining captain, the men, the lord of the manor, the shareholders, would reap the silver; not a coin minted out of it would come to his pocket who discovered the lode.

All at once Richard Cable left the parish church of St. Kerian and attended the Wesleyan meeting-house. What was his reason? It was no other than this. The rector had a large family, growing up; they sat in a pew near the beautiful old carved and gilt oak screen; and Cable could not endure to see them there on

Sunday, and to listen to the voice of a pastor who was able to retain his eldest daughter, aged twenty-three, in the parsonage; also his second, aged twenty; and his third, aged eighteen. Why should the rector be thus privileged, and he himself be without the means of making a home for his children when they were grown up? The ways of Providence were not equal. He gave up going to chapel after a few months, because he was at war with Providence, after which the chapel was named. He beat the stones to pieces with a vindictive hate, as though he were breaking up the social order and reducing all men to one size and ruggedness. The farmer who was principal shareholder and mainstay of Providence Chapel had built himself a new house. Why should he be capable of adding three new rooms to his dwelling, and he, Dicky Cable, be unable to enlarge his cob cottage without encroaching on his garden?

Then his mind turned back to Hanford. He thought of the Hall that might have been his, had Gabriel Gotham behaved rightly to his mother. He knew that house well now, and he took a grim pleasure in considering how he would have disposed of the rooms for the accommodation of his dears. The little Rose Room, that would have done for the twins;

and Mary, sweet Mary, should have had the Blue Room looking out on the terrace, with the window over the door. The Yellow Room would have gone to his mother and baby Bessie. Lettice and Susie could have revelled in the Lavender Room, so called because it always smelt of lavender. How happy the children would have been there! How sweet would have been the sound of their voices as they played among the bushes of laburnum and syringa! The idea was enticing; but Richard never for a moment regretted having refused the offer made him.

His brief life in the Hall had left an indelible mark on him other than that which has been mentioned. In spite of himself, he had been forced to contrast the habits of the cultured with those of the class to which he belonged; and his clear good sense showed him that there were vulgarities and roughnesses that might be sloughed away with advantage; that there were merits as well as demerits in civilisation. Involuntarily, his mind was caught by these points, and hung on them, and he began to correct in himself little uncouthnesses, and to insist on attention to these matters in his children. In Bessie Cable there had ever been a refinement and grace of manner above her position, due to her early association with

Gabriel and the rest of the Gotham family; but Richard had not regarded this or sought to acquire it. Now he appreciated it, and was painfully anxious that his children should acquire it. Indeed, with them there was no difficulty; they had instinctive delicacy and refinement. They had the look of little ladies, with their transparent skins, fine bones, and graceful shapes.

'You're swelling out of your clothes,' said Farmer Tregurtha one day as he came on Richard sitting on the bench at his cottage door, looking at his children.

'What do you mean?' asked Cable.

'So proud,' answered Tregurtha laughing—'proud wi' contemplating them seven little mites.'

'And I've a cause,' said Richard, holding up his head.

He could not get over his difficulty about housing the little girls as they grew older. He could not raise the roof and add a storey, as the clay walls would not bear the superstructure; and to add to the cottage laterally was to rob his garden.

One night, after Cable had been fuming in mind over this trouble all day, he had a remarkable dream. From his bedroom he could look through a tiny window away to a green sloping hillside, which had its head clothed with dense

oak coppice. He had often looked out at this hill and thought nothing of the prospect. This night, however, he dreamed that, as he lay in bed, he was gazing through the window, and although it was night, he saw the whole of that slope and the wood, and the granite tors and the moor clothed in heather and gorse behind it, bathed in glorious sunlight. But what was new and remarkable in the landscape was that on the slope, where now lay a grass field, standing with its back to the coppice stood Hanford Hall. There was no mistaking the house, with its white walls, and windows painted Indian-red, and the great door opening on to the terrace. There it stood, with its flight of stone steps down the slope in three stages. Moreover, he saw himself standing in the doorway, and one of his children's heads peeping out of each window. There was Mary looking from the Blue Room, and Effie from the Rose Room, and Susan from the Lavender Room, and Martha from the Yellow Room. Only he could not make out whether little Bessie were there, and from which window her dear innocent little face, with its look of pain ever on it, was visible. The house had an air of comfort about it, and a freshness, such as Hanford Hall lacked. It had lawn and flower-garden before it, and

gravelled walks; and a summer-house where at Hanford stood the windstrew, a summer-house with a conical roof and a gilt ball at the top. This was the only completely novel feature in the scene. He knew the St. Kerian landscape. He knew the front of the house at Hanford, and of course his children's faces were familiar to him. Why, then, was a perfectly new feature introduced, and how was it that such a jumble of disconnected objects and scenery should occur to him?

When Richard awoke, the dream had made such an impression on his mind that he was unable to shake it off. Only one point puzzled him—the arrangement of the windows. How were they set in front of the house so that there should be seven windows? If he had two on the right, and two above, also two on the left and two above, and one over the door, that would make nine. If he had four on one side and two on the other, and one above the door, that indeed would be seven; but the house would be lopsided. He tried to recall how the windows were at Hanford, and was unable to recollect. All day he puzzled over the problem. As he went through the village, he met the mason.

'Mr. Spry,' said he, 'how could I build a

house on Summerleaze with seven red windows in the front and a door?'

'Summerleaze!' exclaimed the mason. 'Why, sure, that belongs to Farmer Tregurtha. You're surely not a-going to build there?'

'Never mind about that,' said Cable hastily. 'All I ask is, how can I have seven red windows in the front of a house with a door to go in at?'

'You about to build?' exclaimed Spry. 'Wonders will never cease! Where is the money to come from? Show me that, and I'll consider the question how to build with it.'

'I want to know how there could be seven red windows in the front of a house as well as a door, and the front of the house not look crooked and queer.'

'What be the good of puzzling over that, when the land ain't yourn, nor the money itself wherewith to build?' Then he pushed on his way, and left Cable unanswered.

That same day Cable was seated by the roadside. He had broken his pasty into eight pieces; but little Lettice had cried for more, and he had given her his portion, contenting himself with the crumbs. He was hungry and irritable, teased with his dream, and angry at the mason for the contemptuous way in which he had left him with his problem unsolved. All

at once he heard a voice above him, and looking up, saw Farmer Tregurtha standing in his field behind the hedge, gazing down on him and on the little shining heads on which the sun was blazing.

'Hullooh! Dick,' shouted the farmer, 'what is the meaning of this I hear? Spry has been talking all over the village that you are about to buy my land of me, whether I want to sell or no. I did not know you were flush of money and wished to extend your acres!' Tregurtha had dined; he was in a jovial mood. Cable was empty, and an empty stomach makes a bitter soul.

'I'll telly' what,' said the farmer; 'your little ones will come to a workhouse sooner than to a mansion on Summerleaze.'

Then Cable began to tremble. With difficulty he rose to his feet, and looked hard at the face of Tregurtha—a red, good-natured, rough face. He looked beyond, and saw the green meadow that reached up to the oak coppice, and beyond the coppice rose the heathy moor to the granite tors. Then his eyes fell, and he saw his seven little girls looking up at him, wondering, not understanding what was going on—six pairs of blue eyes, only those of Bessie brown like her mother's. Spots of red came on his temple, and sparks danced in his eyes.

With an effort he controlled himself, and reseated himself at the stone-heap. He was trembling. He was in no mood now to speak with his children. 'Run home,' he said to them. 'Mary, take them away; I must return to my work.'

Then Mary held out her hand to Bessie, who could just toddle, and Effie held Bessie by the other hand. Martha took the hand of Effie that was disengaged, and Lettice the free hand of Martha, and Jane that of Susie; and so the seven little creatures walked away, casting seven little shadows on the white road; and Richard Cable looked after them, and when they had turned a corner, covered his face and wept like a woman. When he came home in the evening, he was whistling a tune, to let the little ones suppose that he was in good spirits. He turned out a caldron of boiled turnips and Essex dough-nuts into seven little soup-plates, and seven little stools were set at the table. Cable sat by the fire with his dish on his knees and a spoon in his hand, eating a mouthful, and then watching the children; but all the while his mind was on the house with seven red windows.

When they had finished their supper, Mrs. Cable undressed and washed the children; and Richard took them one after the other on his knee and combed their hair and kissed their

cherry lips, and made them all kneel together round him and fold their hands and close their eyes and say 'Our Father.' But his heart was not with them when they prayed; it was sealed. When they had finished 'Amen,' he carried each in his arms, clinging to his neck, and put them one by one to bed. Little Bessie would not go to sleep that night unless he sat by her and let her hold his hand. He submitted, and watched the closing eyes of the child.

When all the seven were breathing softly in sleep, Cable mended some shoes and knitted some stockings, and carpentered at a broken stool. Then he went up to his bedroom. The moon was shining through the window. He opened it, and leaning on the sill, looked out. The moon floated like a silver bowl on the indigo-blue heaven sea. Here was the very bowl in which St. Kerian had rowed to the earthly Paradise; there, dusky, in it was discernible the form of the rowing saint. Below lay the village, bathed in pearly light. The granite church tower, with its pinnacles turned outwards, glittered against the bank of black yews between it and the parsonage. The only other light was that from the forge, red, palpitating. Why was the smith working so late? Ah! he could earn money, a good deal of money, by hammering and turning his iron after

usual hours, but much was not to be got out of breaking stones for the road.

Richard Cable wiped the perspiration from his brow. A great struggle was going on in his breast. There was money, abundance of money to be had for the asking, money that, he was told, was now lying idle and accumulating. Should he put out his hand and accept some of it? He would not be obliged to communicate with Josephine, only with the Hanford lawyer. What was before him if he remained at St. Kerian? Only privations and cares, the parting with his children. His soul was full of sores; and this day a rough hand had brushed over the quivering nerves, and brought the sweat of agony to his brow, and the tears of humiliation over his cheeks. But for all that, he could not resolve to touch the money offered him. It would be a condoning of the wrongs offered by Gabriel Gotham to his mother, and of those offered him by Josephine.

'It must be somehow, but not that way,' he said. 'I will have the house, like Hanford Hall, of my own building, with the seven red windows, as in my dream. I will think of nothing now but how I may come at it.'

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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